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Borrowed Borrowings: Nahuatl Loan Words in English*

Jason D. Haugen¹

Abstract

This paper catalogs the words of Nahuatl (aka Mexicano) origin that are attested in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. These words are cataloged under two classifications: semantic and chronological. Semantically, these words are grouped according to terms pertaining to zoology, botany/horticulture, culinary terms, intoxicants/psychoactives/drugs, mytho-religious terms, cultural items, cultural events, ethnological and linguistic labels, mineralogical terms, and other. Chronologically, words are attested entering the English language in each century since the 1500s, with the earliest borrowing attested in 1555 and the most recent in 1950. Loan words from Nahuatl into English are particularly interesting because they were typically not borrowed due to direct contact with speakers of Nahuatl, but secondarily through contact and trade with speakers of continental and, later, Mexican Spanish, or other European languages.

Keywords: loan words – borrowing – Nahuatl – English

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1. Introduction

This paper presents a catalogue of words of Nahuatl origin that appear in the English language, as indicated by the etymologies recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED).

Nahuatl, also known by the name Mexicano, was the language spoken by the Aztecs as well as other groups indigenous to Central Mexico at the time of the Spanish colonial invasion of Central America in the early 16th century, and varieties of Nahuatl are still spoken by more than 100,000 people in that area to this day. English borrowings from Nahuatl are particularly interesting because they have typically been borrowed from other European languages, primarily Spanish (continental as well as Mexican) but also French or Latin, rather than through direct contact between English and Nahuatl speakers.

Below I present ninety-three words which are given a definitive Nahuatl etymology by the OED. These are presented under two different classifications: (i) a semantic classification based on lexical items occurring in the same (or similar) semantic fields (§2); and (ii) a chronological classification, based on the time of first attestation in written English, according to the OED (§3).

As we shall see, the loan words that appear in this corpus are in general of the type that would be expected due to contact between colonizing European cultures and the indigenous peoples of the “New World” of Central America. The native terms for previously unknown indigenous concepts such as plants, animals, tools and other cultural items, etc., would typically be borrowed into Spanish by Spanish-speaking colonizers in direct contact with speakers of the indigenous languages (Nahuatl or otherwise), and these terms later passed from Spanish into other European languages (e.g. English or French) through trade among the nations of Europe. In the earliest days this secondary borrowing took place by speakers of British English borrowing from speakers of continental Spanish, but more recent borrowing have obviously more frequently speakers of American English borrowing from speakers of Mexican Spanish.

Nahuatl was, of course, only one of several indigenous languages that had a large impact on colonial Spanish and that, ultimately, led to loan words being borrowed into English (and other languages). Zamorra (1982), for example, discusses the relatively (and disproportionately) large linguistic influence of Taino on Spanish throughout the Western Hemisphere, which was a direct result of very early contact of speakers of those two languages. Many Spanish borrowings from Nahuatl and Quechua, on the other hand, came into the language later and have been limited by an “equatorial isogloss”, where loans from Nahuatl are generally used north of the equator and loans from Quechua are preferred in the south (p. 162). Loan words that have passed into Latin American Spanish from other indigenous languages tend to be even much more sporadic and localized.

Likewise, English is not the only recipient of Nahuatl loan words borrowed through an intermediary language like Spanish. Because of the global nature of Spanish colonial trade, after the fall of Mexico many Nahuatl loan words were exported back to Europe (along with Aztec goods), and even as far afield as the Philippines (Leon-Portilla 1960, cited by Lozano 1981). In addition, since speakers of Nahuatl were long used as “translators” for the Spanish both during the colonization of Mexico and what eventually became the modern-day U.S. Southwest, Nahuatl became a kind of lingua franca and many of its words became loans into other indigenous languages as well, sometimes via Spanish but also in some cases directly (Bright 1979, 2000; Miller 1990).

For a more comprehensive documentation of American (and Mexican) indigenous loan words in (primarily American) English see Cutler (1994) and Carney (1997). A classic early study of Nahuatl loan words in American English was presented by Watson (1938), who gives a particularly detailed catalogue of botanical and culinary words of Nahuatl origin on

the US southwestern frontier. Below my focus will be limited to the current documentation of English loan words that are given a clear Nahuatl etymology in the OED (but see Appendix G).

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 organizes the ninety-three Nahuatl loan words into categories based on semantic fields. Section 3 then gives a chronological classification of the loan words, grouping them according to the century of their first attestation. If the OED specifically notes an intermediary language then this is also noted here. Section 4 then presents some general discussion of the results of my survey. It should be pointed out that only the words given a clear Nahuatl etymology by the OED are included in sections 2-4. Appendices A and B present the OED's key definitions and etymological notes, respectively, for these words.

The primary lists given below are not completely satisfactory for two reasons. First, they include some words which are obviously not in frequent use in any variety of spoken English (at least not in everyday, non-specialized discourse), and secondly, these lists are incomplete because they do not include other possible Nahuatl words for Nahuatl concepts (such as deity names) or place names that are used by English speakers, even if only in typically academic contexts, but which are not recorded (and therefore not "canonized") by the OED. (See Appendix G for further Nahuatl loan words noted by Watson 1938, which are either not noted as Nahuatl loans or not recorded at all in the OED).

The OED also includes some English borrowings that may or may not involve Nahuatl etymologies. I include these in the next three Appendices. Appendix C includes words that the OED says might involve a Nahuatl origin, but for which I find some specific reason to doubt a connection to Nahuatl. Appendix D presents the OED's examples of words that have at one time spuriously been connected to Nahuatl, but which are now definitely known to not be connected or are cast into serious doubt. Appendix E includes a range of indigenous loan words, identified as "Mexican" by the OED, which given their similarity in form to other words of definitive Nahuatl origin I think might also plausibly be of Nahuatl origin, and which may be confirmed (or discounted) as such in future research. Appendix F lists the OED citations for each of the lexical entries in all of the earlier appendices, as some entries have been updated in the online database since the publication of the print version of the OED's Second Edition in 1989. As noted above, Appendix G includes the list of loan words in American English identified by Watson (1938) as being from Nahuatl. This list includes some terms that are not marked specifically as being from Nahuatl by the OED, as well as some regionalisms (primarily from Texas and Arizona) that are not recorded in the OED at all. I identify these and include Watson's proposed definition and etymology for each.

Before presenting the word lists I would like to make a quick remark on the method that I employed in this survey. To collect the information on Nahuatl borrowings contained in the OED I ran an advanced search in the OED's "etymologies" field for the search terms *Nahuatl*, *Aztec*, and *Mexican* (~ *Mexicano*).² The lack of a consistent reference to the name of the indigenous language made the compilation of the overall list more difficult than was necessary, and would be problematic for someone searching who did not use each of the three different language names. There was only a slight overlap in the three resulting lists, and it was clear in most cases that the OED intended "Mexican" to be interpreted as "Nahuatl". In the following classifications I only include the main entries for those lexical items which appear multiple times: e.g. *chile/chilly* but not the obvious compound forms *chile ancho*, *chile poblano*, etc., or derived forms such as those from *Mexico* and *Mexican* like *Mexicanize*, *Mex*, *Tex-Mex*, or forms like *pellotine*, which is derived from *peyote* (both chemically, in the literal sense of the chemical *pellotine* being derived from the *peyote* plant, as well as etymologically), and *pulqueria*, the name for a shop or bar that sells *pulque*, etc.

² My compiled data were last cross-checked on September 10, 2008.

2. Semantic Classification

I have grouped the Nahuatl loan words into the following semantic classifications: *zoological* terms, including the names of animals; *botanical/horticultural* terms, including the names of plants and man-made agricultural features; *culinary* terms, including foods and plants cultivated and/or prepared for human consumption, not including medicinal or intoxicating substances; *intoxicants*, including alcoholic beverages, psychoactive plants and other drugs; *mytho-religious* terms, including the name of a deity and terms for religious locations; *cultural items*, including tools and products of human labor; *cultural events*, including the name for the Mesoamerican ballgame (*tlachtli*); *ethnological* and *linguistic* group labels; a single *mineralogical* term; and one term which is simply categorized here as *other*.

Table 1 summarizes these categories and shows the number of terms represented in each category. Further explication and a full listing of the terms in each category follow in subsequent sub-sections.

Category	# of Terms
Zoological	11
Botanical/Horticultural	15
Culinary	21
Intoxicants/Psychoactives/Drugs	10
Mytho-Religious	4
Cultural Items	11
Cultural Events	1
Ethnological/Linguistic Labels	18
Mineralogical	1
Other	1
Total	93

Table 1: Semantic categories and the number of terms found in each

2.1. Zoological Terms

The zoological terms include the names of mammals (*cacomistle*, *conepatl*, *coyote*, *mazame*, *ocelot*), reptiles (*axolotl*, *teguexin*), insects (*pinacate*), and birds (*quetzal*, *zopilote*). The complete list of Nahuatl-derived zoological terms is given in Table 2. In each of the tables below I include the Nahuatl-derived term and its first attestation in English. Definitions are given in Appendix A, and the etymology provided by the OED is given in Appendix B.

<i>axolotl</i>	1786
<i>cacomistle</i>	1869
<i>conepatl</i>	1774
<i>colin</i>	1678
<i>coyote</i>	1824
<i>mazame</i>	1791
<i>ocelot</i>	1774
<i>pinacate</i>	1895

<i>quetzal</i>	1800
<i>teguexin</i>	1879
<i>zopilote</i>	1787

Table 2. Zoological terms derived from Nahuatl

One comment that I would like to make here, which also applies to each of the sub-sections below, is that it would be a very interesting project to trace the history of the incorporation into English of each term in each of the semantic fields that I have identified. However, this kind of in-depth lexical stratigraphy goes beyond the scope of the present paper.

One remark regarding these zoological terms specifically, however, is that it is interesting that some of the more common everyday English words were not borrowed until relatively recently, e.g. *coyote* (1824) and *pinacate* (1895). Some of the earliest terms, such as *colin* (1678) and *mazame* (1791) seem not to have “caught on” nearly as well. With respect to the zoological terms this is no doubt related to the fact that the physical distribution of certain animals may be limited to the more southerly geographic zones and hence these have not necessitated frequent reference by speakers of English (unlike, say, the ubiquitous coyote). However, a more thorough stratigraphic project may well find more interesting socio-historic rationales for the adoption (or not) of particular loan words, whether of Nahuatl or other origins.

2.2. Botanical and Horticultural Terms

Nahuatl-derived botanical terms include the names of trees (*ahuehuete*, *hule*, *mesquite*, †*mizquitl*, *ocote*, *oyamel*); shrubs (*guayule*, *Tecoma*); plants (*melt n.²*, *quamoclit*, *tule*); and grasses (*sacate/zacate*, *teosinte*). Horticultural terms include two words describing particular ways to cultivate the environment to grow plants for human use: *chinampa* and *milpa*.

This list is summarized in Table 3:

<i>ahuehuete</i>	1828
<i>chinampa</i>	1832
<i>guayule</i>	1906
<i>hule</i>	1846
<i>melt, n.²</i>	1605
<i>mesquite</i>	1759
<i>milpa</i>	1648
† <i>mizquitl (obsolete)</i>	1753
<i>ocote</i>	1787
<i>oyamel</i>	1871
<i>quamoclit</i>	1633
<i>sacate/zacate</i>	1848
<i>Tecoma</i>	1846
<i>teosinte</i>	1877
<i>tule</i>	1837

Table 3. Botanical and Horticultural terms derived from Nahuatl

Once again we see a large range of dates for the different initial times of incorporation for each of the various terms. It is interesting to note that the earliest terms were borrowed into English in 1605 and 1648, which is around 80 to 120 years after the first contacts of the

Spanish with the Aztecs (Tenochtitlan fell to Cortez in 1521). One observation is that the term *mizquitl*, dated to 1753, was apparently made obsolete (through morphological modification to a more Spanish-sounding form) very early on, since *mesquite* is attested in English as early as 1759.

The majority of these terms, however, were borrowed into English from the very late 18th century and later, which reflects the history of the expanding United States western frontier during that time period. Watson (1938) is a particularly invaluable resource on the record of Nahuatl-derived botanical borrowings in the US Southwest (especially in Arizona and Texas) in this historical period, and he includes a number of words for American English that are not recorded by the OED; see Appendix G for examples.

2.3. Culinary Terms

In the category of *culinary terms* I include fruits, vegetables and other edible plants that are typically consumed by humans for food, as well as the names for preparations (cooked or smoked) of foods including fruits and vegetables. I do not include here preparations or plants that are used as intoxicants or for medicinal purposes.

The OED attests several names for fruits, vegetables and edible plants (*avocado*, *camote*, *chayote*, *chili/chilly*, *jalapeño*, *jicama*, *jicara*, *nopal*, and *tomato*), as well as to the names for cooked (or otherwise prepared) foods (*atole*, *chipotle*, *chocolate*, *guacamole*, *mole* (n.⁷), *pinole*, *posole*, and *pupusa*). Edible and preparable seeds include *cacao* and the later corrupted form *cocoa*, both of which can refer to the seeds themselves as well as the concoction(s) made from those seeds, as well as *chia*. A final term is *chicle*, which refers to the plant-derived gum-like substance which serves as the source for chewing gum.

These terms are summarized in Table 4.

<i>atole</i>	1716
<i>avocado</i>	1697
<i>cacao</i>	1555
<i>camote</i>	1842
<i>chayote</i>	1884
<i>chia</i>	1832
<i>chicle</i>	1889
<i>chili/chilly</i>	1662
<i>chipotle</i>	1950
<i>chocolate</i>	1604
<i>cocoa</i>	1672
<i>guacamole</i>	1920
<i>jalapeño</i>	1949
<i>jicama</i>	1604
<i>jicara</i>	1859
<i>mole</i> , n. ⁷	1891
<i>nopal</i>	1578
<i>pinole</i>	1648
<i>posole</i>	1699
<i>pupusa</i>	1948
<i>tomato</i>	1604

Table 4. Culinary terms derived from Nahuatl

Culinary items is the largest category of Nahuatl borrowings since it contains the most lexical items. It is also the one which has the greatest spread of dates of first attestation, containing the earliest attested borrowing (*cacao*, 1555) as well as the most recent (*pupusa*, *jalapeño*, *chipotle*, from 1948, 1949, and 1950, respectively). It is quite clear that food is a major domain for cultural (and hence, linguistic) borrowing, and it would not be surprising if more Nahuatl-derived borrowings will be incorporated into English (and other languages) from Spanish in the future, as Mexican and other Latin American cuisines spread in popularity from the US Southwest to broader areas of the United States and, indeed, the world.

2.4. Intoxicants, psychoactive plants, and other drug terms

The terms in this category include the names of plants with psychoactive properties (*ololiuqui*, *peyote*, *teonanacatl*, *toloache*); alcoholic beverages, which are derived from the processing of plants (*octli*, *pulque*, *sotol*, *tepache*); one term which is used for both of the aforementioned functions, albeit with reference to the use of (or the product derived from the use of) different plants (*mescal*); and the name of a drug that is derived from the resin contained within the tubers of a particular plant (*jalap*).

These lexical items are summarized in Table 5:

<i>jalap</i>	1675
<i>mescal</i>	1709
<i>octli</i>	1787
<i>ololiuqui</i>	1894
<i>peyote</i>	1849
<i>pulque</i>	1572
<i>sotol</i>	1881
<i>teonanacatl</i>	1875
<i>tepache</i>	1926
<i>toloache</i>	1894

Table 5. Terms for intoxicants, psychoactive plants, and other drugs derived from Nahuatl

The OED also lists the name of another plant with psychoactive properties, *marijuana* (1894), as an additional possible word of Nahuatl origin. The OED attributes the word *marijuana* to Mexican Spanish *marihuana*, which is listed as “of uncertain origin” but possibly relatable to the Nahuatl word *mallihuan* ‘prisoner’. With no other evidence presented aside from the possibly accidental phonological similarity between *marihuana* and *mallihuan*, I am not at all convinced by this proposed etymology, and thus have placed *marijuana* in Appendix C as an English borrowing improbably attributed to Nahuatl. See that Appendix for further discussion.

2.5. Mytho-Religious terms

The mytho-religious terms in the corpus include *Quetzalcoatl*, the name of a specific god in Aztec religious belief, and the concept *nagual*, which is defined by the OED as “a guardian spirit in animal form, believed to accompany and guide an individual through life; an animal form believed to be assumed by a human through magical or supernatural means”. I also include in this category two terms for locations relevant to the practicing of religion: *teocalli* and *teopan*.

These terms are summarized in Table 6:

<i>nagual</i>	1822
<i>Quetzalcoatl</i>	1578
<i>teocalli</i>	1613
<i>teopan</i>	1891

Table 6. Mytho-religious terms derived from Nahuatl

This is one section for which the OED is quite impoverished compared to the set of words that could be considered as possible borrowings from Nahuatl. The anthropological, archaeological, and historical records are replete with the indigenous names for a vast cosmology, including the names of deities (many more than simply *Quetzalcoatl*) and other mythological beings, rituals, locations, calendrical terms, and more. Although perhaps not in everyday use among most speakers of English, the inclusion of such terms from the specialized literature would greatly amplify the number of extant Nahuatl borrowings used in the English language.

2.6. Terms for cultural items

I include under the broad label “cultural items” such things as tools (*atlatl*, *mecate*, *metate*, *molcajete*, *petaca*); products of human labor, such as shelter (*jacal*), clothing (*tilma*), or sleeping mats (*petate*); and natural things that are used by humans for functions other than those listed above (*copal*, *istle*, *tacamahac*).

These borrowings are summarized in Table 7:

<i>atlatl</i>	1871
<i>copal</i>	1577
<i>istle</i>	1883
<i>jacal</i>	1838
<i>mecate</i>	1849
<i>metate</i>	1625
<i>molcajete</i>	1906
<i>petaca</i>	1648
<i>petate</i>	1843
<i>tacamahac</i>	1577
<i>tilma</i>	1851

Table 7. Terms for cultural items

One interesting thing to note is that, although this is a relatively modest list, words are represented from each of the relevant centuries with the exception of the 18th century (i.e. the 1700s). This may reflect the lag time between the earliest adoption and trade of Aztec goods in Europe (in the 16th and 17th centuries) and the later contact and subsequent borrowing amongst English-speaking Americans and Spanish speakers on the western US frontiers since the 19th century.

2.7. Terms for cultural events

There is one term that I classify uniquely as a “cultural event” – *tlachtli*, which as a label refers to the ceremonial ballgame of the Aztecs. This term is shown in Table 8:

<i>tlachtli</i>	1875
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Table 8. A term for a cultural event

Once again, it would be possible to include the indigenous names for other events or rituals of the Aztec world (e.g. *Toxcatl*) as further Nahuatl borrowings into English. The OED seems to be silent on which criteria are used to exclude those but allow *tlachtli*.

2.8. Ethnological labels and/or language names

Not surprisingly, the names of many ethnic groups and languages (or language groups) indigenous to Mexico have Nahuatl origins, and some of these have been borrowed into English. As in many cases, such names can often be used either for a group of people or for the language(s) they speak. The list of these Nahuatl-derived terms is given in Table 9:

<i>Chicano</i>	1947
<i>Mazatec</i>	1892
<i>Mexican</i>	1578
<i>Mixe</i>	1616
<i>Mixteca</i>	1787
<i>Mixteco</i>	1911
<i>Nahua</i>	1875
<i>Nahuatl</i>	1858
<i>Nahuatlaca</i>	1775
<i>Nahuatlan</i>	1897
<i>Oaxacan</i>	1897
<i>Olmec</i>	1852
<i>Olmeca</i>	1787
<i>Otomi</i>	1782
<i>Tlapanec</i>	1875
<i>Toltec</i>	1787
<i>Totonac</i>	1787
<i>Zapotec</i>	1797

Table 9. Ethnographic labels and language names

Given the specifically political nature of many acts of what we may term ethnonymization, where outsider labels (exonyms) for a particular group are often imposed upon that group, the in-depth study of the adoption of these particular Nahuatl-based ethnic labels, to the exclusion of other possible labels and/or endonyms, would be very interesting.

2.9. A Mineralogical Term

The OED lists a single term related to mineralogy: *chalchuite*, which refers to a Mexican variety of turquoise.

<i>chalchuite</i>	1843
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Table 10. A mineralogical term

There surely must be other mineralogical features unique to Mesoamerica that had Nahuatl names. Perhaps if such terms have ever been borrowed into English, e.g. among geologists, mineralogists, and other earth science specialists, their use is sufficiently specialized as to have been excluded from the OED.

2.10. Other

There is one final term that I leave unclassified, since it is derived from a proper noun: i.e. *Montezuma*. The OED only gives examples of *Montezuma* as a modifier, as in compounds such as *Montezuma quail* and in *Montezuma's revenge*. *Montezuma* is derived from the Aztec ruler at the time of Spanish contact, Montezuma II (1466-1520, according to the OED). The earliest English citation given in the OED for *Montezuma* is in the term *Montezuma quail* from 1917, although the Latinate variant, *Cyrtonyx montezumae*, is cited as early as 1830.

This concludes our presentation of the Nahuatl loan words in their semantic classification. We now turn to the chronological classification.

3. Chronological Classification

My chronological classification groups the Nahuatl loan words according to which century they were borrowed in, as evidenced by the earliest recorded appearance of each term in English writing. The earliest attestation of a Nahuatl loan word is 1555 for *cacao*, and the most recent is 1950 for *chipotle*. As the following tables reveal, there were seven terms borrowed in the 16th century (Table 11); seventeen in the 17th century (Table 12); eighteen in the 18th century (Table 13); forty-one in the 19th century (Table 14); and ten in the 20th century. Each of these tables includes the date of the first attestation of each entry, as well as the intermediary language it was borrowed through, if so noted by the OED.

Date	Entry	Intermediary Language
1555	<i>cacao, n.</i>	Spanish
1572	<i>pulque, n.</i>	Central American Spanish
1577	<i>copal, n.</i>	Spanish, French
1577	<i>tacamahac, n.</i>	Spanish
1578	<i>Mexican, n. and adj.</i>	Spanish
1578	<i>nopal, n.</i>	Spanish
1578	<i>Quetzalcoatl, n.</i>	Spanish

Table 11. 16th Century Nahuatl Borrowings

1604	<i>chocolate</i>	French, Spanish
1604	<i>jicama, n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1604	<i>tomato, n.</i>	French, and/or Spanish and Portuguese
1605	<i>melt, n.</i> ²	Middle French
1613	<i>teocalli, n.</i>	—
1616	<i>Mixe, n. and adj.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1625	<i>metate, n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1633	<i>quamoclit, n.</i>	post-classical Latin
1648	<i>milpa, n.</i>	Mexican Spanish

1648	petaca, <i>n.</i>	Spanish
1648	pinole, <i>n.</i>	Spanish
1662	chilli, chilly	Spanish
1672	cocoa, <i>n.</i>	Spanish
1675	jalap, <i>n.</i>	French, ad. Spanish
1678	colin, <i>n.</i>	—
1697	avocado, <i>n.</i>	Spanish
1699	posole, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish

Table 12. 17th Century Nahuatl Borrowings

1709	mescal, <i>n.</i>	American Spanish
1716	atole	American Spanish
1753	mizquitl, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1759	mesquite, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1774	conepatl, <i>n.</i>	—
1774	ocelot, <i>n.</i>	French (< Spanish)
1775	Nahuatlaca, <i>n.</i> and <i>adj.</i>	—
1782	Otomi, <i>n.</i> and <i>adj.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1786	axolotl, <i>n.</i>	—
1787	Mixteca, <i>n.</i> and <i>adj.</i>	Spanish
1787	ocote, <i>n.</i>	Mexican/Central American Spanish
1787	octli, <i>n.</i>	—
1787	Olmecca, <i>n.</i>	—
1787	Toltec, <i>n.</i> and <i>a.</i>	Spanish
1787	Totonac	Spanish
1787	zopilote, <i>n.</i>	Spanish
1791	mazame, <i>n.</i>	French
1797	Zapotec, <i>n.</i> and <i>a.</i>	Spanish

Table 13. 18th Century Nahuatl Borrowings

1800	quetzal, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1822	nagual, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1824	coyote, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1828	ahuehuate, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1832	chia, <i>n.</i> ²	Mexican Spanish
1832	chinampa, <i>n.</i>	—
1837	tule, <i>n.</i>	Spanish
1838	jacal	Mexican Spanish
1842	camote	Mexican Spanish
1843	chalchuite, <i>n.</i>	—
1843	petate, <i>n.</i>	Spanish
1846	hule	Mexican Spanish
1846	Tecoma, <i>n.</i>	—
1848	sacate, zacate	Mexican Spanish
1849	mecate, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1849	peyote, <i>n.</i>	Spanish
1851	tilma	Mexican Spanish

1852	Olmec, <i>n.</i> and <i>adj.</i>	—
1858	Nahuatl, <i>adj.</i> and <i>n.</i>	Spanish
1859	jicara	American Spanish
1869	cacomistle	American Spanish
1871	atlatl	—
1871	oyamel, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1875	Nahua, <i>n.</i> and <i>adj.</i>	—
1875	teonanacatl	—
1875	tlachtli	—
1875	Tlapanec, <i>n.</i> (and <i>a.</i>)	Spanish
1877	teosinte, <i>n.</i>	French
1879	teguexin	—
1881	sotol, <i>n.</i>	American Spanish
1883	istle, <i>n.</i>	—
1884	chayote	Spanish
1889	chicle, <i>n.</i>	American Spanish
1891	mole, <i>n.</i> ⁷	Mexican Spanish
1891	teopan, <i>n.</i>	—
1892	Mazatec, <i>adj.</i> and <i>n.</i>	Spanish
1894	ololiuqui, <i>n.</i>	—
1894	toloache	Mexican Spanish
1895	pinacate, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1897	Nahuatlán, <i>n.</i> and <i>adj.</i>	—
1897	Oaxacan, <i>n.</i> and <i>adj.</i>	Spanish

Table 14. 19th Century Nahuatl Borrowings

1906	guayule	American Spanish
1906	molcajete, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1911	Mixteco, <i>n.</i> and <i>adj.</i>	Spanish
1917	Montezuma, <i>n.</i>	—
1920	guacamole	American Spanish
1926	tepache	Mexican Spanish
1947	Chicano, <i>n.</i> and <i>adj.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1948	pupusa, <i>n.</i>	American Spanish (El Salvador)
1949	jalapeño, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish
1950	chipotle, <i>n.</i>	Mexican Spanish

Table 15. 20th Century Nahuatl Borrowings

The chronological classification of the Nahuatl loan words is of interest because of the clear historical need for English speakers to borrow different Nahuatl words from various sources at different times. For example, borrowings from continental Spanish into British English prevailed in the first centuries after contact with the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere, but borrowing from Mexican Spanish into American English has been the norm more recently. The reason for this is that the introduction of the Nahuatl terms in the first century or two resulted from trade amongst various European nations with Spain after Spain had brought Aztec goods back to Europe. It was only later, as English-speaking Americans continued to spread westward and began to encounter Spanish-speaking peoples in the “New

World”, first with New Spain and then, after 1821, Mexico, that Nahuatl-derived terms began to be borrowed directly into American English. This is not necessarily reflected in the etymologies listed in the OED, however, other than listing most non-Spanish sources of Nahuatl loans in the earliest periods (with, for example, only one non-Spanish borrowing, *teosinte*, listed since the end of the 18th century).

A careful history of each term and its path into English would be an extremely interesting project that would minimally require tracing each of the quotations used in the OED, but this still remains to be done.

4. Discussion

There are several notes of linguistic interest that can be made about Nahuatl loan words, particularly in regard to the phonological and morphological adaptations that have occurred in the borrowing process.

The most striking phonological adaptation is the typical replacement of two non-Spanish phonemes found in Nahuatl: /tʎ/ and /tʂ/. The former is maintained word-initially in two borrowings (*tlachtli* and *Tlapanec*), but is usually replaced with *-te* word-finally (see discussion below), while the latter is replaced with *ch-* word-initially (e.g. Sp. *chicle* < Nah. *tzictli*); word-internally, *-tz-* has been retained in some forms (e.g. *quetzal*) while being replaced with *-ch-* in others (e.g. *tolache*, derived from the compounded form of *toloa* ‘to bow the head’ + *tzin* ‘reverential’).

There are at least two noteworthy morphological adaptations of Nahuatl grammar attested in these borrowings. The first was the blurring of Nahuatl derived forms, such as compounds, into new simple Spanish roots. These include such forms as *chipotle* (< Nah. *chil-* ‘chili’ + *pochtli* ‘smoke’);³ *conepatl* (< Nah. *cone-* ‘child’ + *epatl* ‘fox’); and *teosinte* (< Nah. *teotl* ‘god’ + *cintli/centli* ‘dry ear or cob of maize’). At least one Spanish form maintains a relatively clear Nahuatl-derived compound, whereas it is probably more like a root for most English speakers: *guacamole* (< Sp. *ahuacate* ‘avocado’ + *mole* ‘sauce’ < Nah. *ahuacatl* ‘avocado’ + *molli* ‘sauce’). It is interesting to note that the Anglicization of this word as something like [gwa-kʎ mo-li] accidentally brings the pronunciation of the second compound element more in line with the Nahuatl original than is the case for this term in Spanish. The same is true for English *chili*, which is (accidentally) much closer to the original Nahuatl *chilli* than is the Spanish *chile*. Most English speakers sensitive to the Spanish origin of the Nahuatl-derived word *chili* prefer and use the Spanish form. In this situation, then, the issue of “authenticity” arises, and it would be interesting to see how this might play out among different speakers (or groups of speakers) if the Nahuatl origin were more popularly known (i.e. whether speakers now preferring *chile* would revert to the more indigenous-sounding, and thus potentially more “authentic”, pronunciation, even if this so happens to be nearly identical to the Anglicization, *chili*, of the Nahuatl word).

The second morphological adaptation involved the reanalysis, or perhaps more accurately stated as *non-analysis*, of certain aspects of Nahuatl morphological structure. The most obvious example of this is found in the case of the so-called “absolutive” suffix *-tl*, which in Nahuatl marks the end of non-possessed nominals and appears in complementary distribution with pronominal possessor prefixes. Since the “citation form” of various nouns are typically not given in the context of being possessed, many Nahuatl nouns borrowed into Spanish took this form. Since /tʎ/ was not a phoneme of Spanish the phonological adaptation of word final –

³ The OED states that the form *chipotle* dates from “1976 or earlier”, but that this English borrowing is attested as *chilpocle* or *chilpotle* in “1953 or earlier”. Note the phonological simplification that obscures the clear nature of the original compound as being derived from *chil-* ‘chili’.

tl into (usually) *-te* went along with the reanalysis of the morphologically complex form into a simplex root form. For example, the Spanish etymon of English *tomato*, *tomate*, derives from the Nahuatl root *toma*, which in its non-possessed form would have been *tomatl*. When marked with a possessor prefix, however, the *-tl* suffix would not have appeared. The replacement of *-tl* with *-te* is quite characteristic (viz. *chocolate*, *coyote*, *mecate*, *mesquite*, *metate*, and many others), although Spanish *-te* also replaced the Nahuatl ending *-tli* in some forms (e.g. *camote*, *chayote*, *teosinte*). Only a few English borrowings, derived from written Spanish sources giving the original Nahuatl words, survive with the *-tl* endings: *atlAtl*, *conepatl*, the obsolete *mesquitl* (which was quickly replaced in the spoken language by the Spanish-derived *mesquite*), *Nahuatl*, *Quetzalcoatl*, and *teonanacatl*.

5. Conclusion

In sum, the English language contains a large number of Nahuatl loan words which entered the language through a process of secondary borrowing. I have documented the OED's attestation of these words along two separate classifications (semantically and chronologically). In the Appendices I discuss some words which will have to be either confirmed or discounted as Nahuatl loans in future research, and I also include comprehensive coverage of an earlier survey by Watson (1938), who documented additional Nahuatl loan words in certain varieties of American English that have not been included in the OED.

This primarily descriptive study leaves several important lines of investigation open for future work. First and foremost would be a more detailed study of the actual use (spoken or written) of individual words cited in this collection. It would be quite informative to investigate more thoroughly how individual Nahuatl words got incorporated into different languages (e.g. first Spanish, and then English and other European languages) through different borrowing contexts, and then to see how they may or may not have been maintained in spoken (and/or written) language. I have an impression that the vast majority of these words are not in general circulation among most speakers of English at this point in time, and the ones which are used the most frequently are probably no longer recognized as borrowings, either from Spanish or from Nahuatl (e.g. *chocolate*, *coyote*, *tomato*, etc.). Other terms circulate only in specialized discourses (e.g. *Quetzalcoatl*, *teocalli*, etc.). Future questions that should be addressed include: which of these vocabulary items are actually known, and to what group(s) of speakers? Which words are actually used, and by whom, where, when, and why?

An additional line of investigation would pertain to the historiography of the *Oxford English Dictionary* itself, and the processes that led to the "canonization" of this particular set of terms to the exclusion of others. One contribution that I hope that this article will make is to encourage a more in-depth look at the pioneering work of Watson (1938), to see if some subset of his proposals for Nahuatl borrowings into regional variants of American English can be confirmed and possibly incorporated into future editions of the OED.

To conclude, the history of the incorporation of these Nahuatl words into the English language is particularly rich, given the complexity of the historical circumstances involving differing geographical, temporal and sociopolitical contexts of colonialism, trade, and other inter-cultural contacts that led to centuries of borrowing a large number of secondary loan words, i.e. "borrowed borrowings".

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Appendix A

Alphabetical Catalogue of Nahuatl/Mexicano Loan Words in English

Below is the complete list of ninety-three words having a clear Nahuatl origin according to the current online version of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, along with their dates of first attestation in English and the OED's definition:

ahuehuete, *n.* 1828

A Mexican swamp cypress, *Taxodium mucronatum* (family Taxodiaceae), which can attain great girth and is important for the production of medicinal resins and timber.

atlatl 1871

A throwing-stick used by American Indians and Eskimos.

atole 1716

A kind of corn or other meal; gruel or porridge made of this.

axolotl 1786

A batrachian reptile (*Siredon pisciforme*, family Proteidæ) found in Mexican lakes, resembling the salamander in appearance, but, like all the Proteidæ, retaining throughout life the gills of its young state.

avocado 1697

a. The fruit of a West Indian tree (*Persea gratissima*); a large pear-shaped fruit, called also ALLIGATOR PEAR.

b. The green colour of the flesh of an avocado. In full, *avocado green*. Also as *adj.*

cacao 1555

1. The seed of a tropical American tree (*Theobroma Cacao*, family Byttneriaceæ), from which cocoa and chocolate are prepared.

†2. The powder produced by grinding the seeds, often with other substances mixed; also the drink prepared from the seeds or powder; = COCOA *n.*

cacomistle 1869

A raccoon-like animal of the south-western United States and Mexico, *Bassariscus astutus*.

camote 1842

A name in Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries for any one of several tuber-bearing plants, e.g. the sweet potato and yam.

chalchuite 1843

A green variety of turquoise from Mexico.

chayote 1884

Also **chayota**, **cheyote**. A vine, *Sechium edule*, native to tropical America and cultivated elsewhere for its fruit; the succulent squash-like fruit of this vine. Also called *chocho*.

chia, *n.*² 1832

An annual, typically purple-flowering plant native to Mexico, *Salvia hispanica* (family Lamiaceae (Labiatae)), which is cultivated from the south-western United States to Argentina for its greyish, oily, mucilaginous seed, used in various foods and beverages and historically was a staple food of the Nahuatl people; (also) any of several similar plants of the genus *Salvia*, esp. *S. columbariae*. Freq. attrib., as *chia oil*, *chia seed*, etc.

Chicano 1947

A. n. A person of Mexican birth or descent resident in the U.S. (particularly in those areas annexed in 1848), esp. one who is proud of his Mexican origins and concerned to improve the position of Mexicans in the U.S.; a Mexican-American.

B. adj. Of or pertaining to Mexican-Americans or to the varieties of English and Spanish spoken by them. *See also:* Chicana, Chicanismo

chicle, *n.* 1889

In full **chicle-gum**: a gum-like substance obtained from the bully tree (*Mimusops globosa*), and from the sapodilla (*Sapota zapotilla*), largely used in the United States in the manufacture of chewing-gum; hence, chewing-gum. Hence **chicle** *v. intr.*, to chew gum.

chilli, chilly 1662

1. a. The dried pod of species of Capsicum or Red Pepper, esp. *C. annuum fastigiatum* and *frutescens*. The pods, which are acrid, pungent, and of a deep red colour when ripe, are largely used as a condiment, and when reduced to powder form the basis of Cayenne pepper.

b. The shrub which bears chillies.

chinampa 1832

The native name of the floating-gardens formerly used on the lakes of Mexico, consisting of a wooden raft covered with earth.

chipotle, *n.* 1950

A dried and smoked ripe jalapeño pepper, which is dark reddish-brown with a strong, piquant flavour, and is used esp. in Mexican cooking.

chocolate 1604

1. A beverage made from the seeds of the cacao-tree; now, as distinguished from *cocoa*, that made by dissolving chocolate cake (see next) in boiling water or milk.

2. A paste or cake composed of the seeds of the cacao-fruit roasted and ground, sweetened and flavoured with vanilla and other substances. This is used to make the beverage (sense 1), and also eaten in various comfits. Esp. a sweetmeat in the form of bars, cakes, or drops, often with a qualifying word (see quot. 1925). Also with *a* and *pl.*, a sweetmeat made entirely of or coated with chocolate. See also *milk-chocolate*.

3. † Erroneously applied to the cacao-tree, its fruit or seed. *Obs.*

4. a. Chocolate colour.

b. as *adj.* Chocolate-coloured; dark brown; in U.S. *spec.* of certain soils.

cocoa 1672

†1. The seed of *Theobroma Cacao*, a tropical American tree: more correctly called CACAO. *Obs.* Formerly commonly called *cocoa-nut*, and now often *cocoa-bean*.

2. The Cacao-tree. (*rare* and *improper*.)

3. a. The powder produced by crushing and grinding the seeds, often with other substances added; also, a common beverage made from this powder, or from the prepared seeds. (The ordinary sense.)

b. A shade of brown resembling the colour of the powder. Also *attrib.*

colin* 1678

The American quail or partridge; also called *bob-white*; in pl. the various species of the sub-family Odontophorinæ or Ortyginæ, to which this belongs.

conepatl 1774

An American skunk (genus *Conepatus*, J. E. Gray, 1837).

* The pronunciation of this term was apparently recorded in error. See Appendix B for the OED's discussion.

copal 1577

1. a. A hard translucent odoriferous resin obtained from various tropical trees, and from which a fine transparent varnish is prepared.

covote 1824

a. Zool. The name, in Mexico and now in the United States, of the prairie- or barking-wolf (*Canis latrans*) of the Pacific slope of North America.

guacamole 1920

A Mexican dish made from avocado pears mixed with onions, tomatoes, chili peppers, and seasoning.

guayule 1906

A silver-leaved shrub, *Parthenium argentatum*, of the family Compositæ, native to northern Mexico and adjacent parts of Texas, formerly cultivated as the source of a type of rubber; also, the rubber produced from the plant.

hule 1846

A Central American tree of the genus *Castilloa* (formerly *Castilla*), or the crude rubber obtained from it. So **hu'lero**, **u'lero**, a collector of rubber.

istle 1883

A valuable fibre obtained (in Mexico and Central America) from *Bromelia sylvestris* and species of *Agave*, as *A. Ixtli*, and used for cordage, nets, carpets, etc.

jacal 1838

A hut constructed of erect poles or stakes filled in with wattle and mud, a type common in Mexico and the south-western United States; an adobe house; also, the material or method used in building such a hut.

jalap 1675

1. A purgative drug obtained from the tuberous roots of *Exogonium* (*Ipomoea*) *Purga* and some other convolvulaceous plants; the active principle is the resin contained in the tubers (**resin of jalap**).

2. The Mexican climbing plant *Exogonium Purga*, with salver-shaped purplish flowers; also applied to some allied plants yielding a similar drug.

jalapeño 1949

Also **jalapeño pepper**. A very hot green chilli pepper, used esp. in Mexican-style cooking.

jicama, *n.* 1604

The white, fleshy tuberous root of the yam bean as a vegetable that is eaten raw or cooked, esp. in salads. Also, the plant itself, a tropical leguminous vine, *Pachyrhizus erosus*, cultivated esp. in Central America.

jicara 1859

A Central American name for the *calabash-tree* (s.v. CALABASH 7) or its fruit (CALABASH 2).

mazame, *n.* 1791

Any of various American deer and other ruminants, including the pronghorn, *Antilocapra americana*. Cf. MAZAMA *n.* 1.

Mazatec, *adj.* and *n.* 1892

A. adj. (attrib.). Of or relating to an American Indian people of northern Oaxaca in southern Mexico, or the language they speak.

B. n. 1. A member of the Mazatec people.

2. The Oto-Manguean language spoken by the Mazatecs.

mecate, *n.* 1849

1. A rope made of horsehair or of maguey fibre, used esp. to tether or lead a horse.
2. A measure of land formerly in use in the Yucatan region of Mexico, equal to about 0.04 hectare (0.1 acre). *Obs.*

†melt, *n.*² 1605

Obs. The maguey or American aloe, *Agave americana*.

mescal, *n.* 1709

1. **a.** Any of various plants of the genus *Agave*, of Mexico and the south-western United States; esp. any of several large agaves with panicle inflorescences, including those grown for ornament and hedging (e.g. the American aloe, *A. americana*), those whose bud, root, etc., is cooked as a vegetable (e.g. *A. palmeri* and *A. parryi*), and those whose fermented sap is distilled to produce an alcoholic spirit (the plant in this context being more commonly called *maguey*).
- b.** A strong intoxicating spirit distilled from the fermented sap of an agave. Cf. TEQUILA *n.*, PULQUE *n.*
- c.** The cooked root, head, or bud of an agave used as food.
2. The button-like top of any of several small desert cacti of the genus *Lophophora*, esp. *L. williamsii*, of northern Mexico and southern Texas; a dried preparation of this, ingested for its intoxicating and hallucinogenic properties (chiefly attributable to the alkaloid mescaline); (also) a cactus having such top. Cf. PEYOTE *n.*, *mescal button n.* at Compounds 2.

mesquite, *n.* 1759

1. **a.** Any of various thorny, pinnate-leaved, thicket-forming trees and shrubs of the genus *Prosopis* (family Mimosaceae (Leguminosae)), characteristic of arid regions of Mexico and the south-western United States (also *mesquite tree*); esp. *P. glandulosa* (more fully *honey mesquite*) and *P. pubescens* (more fully *screw-pod mesquite*). Also: the wood of any of these trees. Cf. MIZQUITL *n.*
- b.** Country dominated by mesquite trees; a thicket of mesquite trees.

metate, *n.* 1625

In Central America and the southern United States: a flat or partly hollowed, usually oblong stone on which grain, cocoa, coffee, etc., is ground by means of a smaller stone. Also *metate-stone*. Cf. MANO *n.*²

Mexican, *n.* and *adj.* 1578**A. *n.***

1. A native or inhabitant of Mexico. In early use perh. also: **†**a native or inhabitant of Mexico City (*obs.*).
2. Any of the indigenous languages of Mexico; *spec.* = NAHUATL *n.* Also: the form of Spanish used in Mexico.
3. *U.S. colloq.* Any piece of non-American (esp. Mexican) currency; *spec.* = Mexican dollar *n.* at Special uses 3b. *Obs.*
- †**4. *U.S. regional.* = Mexican sheep *n.* at Special uses 1b. *Obs.*
5. A type of cotton cloth (see quot. 1910). Cf. Mexican cloth *n.* at Special uses 1b.
- B. *adj.*** Of or relating to Mexico, its inhabitants, or its language.

milpa, *n.* 1648

In Central America and Mexico: a small cultivated field, usually of corn or maize.

Mixe, *n.* and *adj.* a1616

- A. *n.*** 1. A member of an American Indian people of Oaxaca in southern Mexico.
2. Any of a group of related languages spoken by this people, which together form the Mixean branch of the Mixe-Zoque family; this group of languages.
- B. *adj.*** Designating, of, or relating to the Mixe or their languages.

Mixteca, *n.* and *adj.* 1787**A. n.** 1. = MIXTEC *n.* 1.MIXTEC *n.* 1. = **A. n.**

1. A member of an American Indian people of southern Mexico.

2. Any of the Otomanguean languages spoken by the Mixtecs.

B. adj. = MIXTEC *adj.*MIXTEC *adj.* = **B. adj.** Of, relating to, or characteristic of the Mixtecs or their languages.**Mixteco**, *n.* and *adj.* 1911**A. n.**1. = MIXTEC *n.* 2. [[See MIXTECA above--JDH]]2. = MIXTEC *n.* 1. [[See MIXTECA above--JDH]]**B. adj.** = MIXTEC *adj.* [[See MIXTECA above--JDH]]† **mizquitl**, *n.* 1753 = MESQUITE *n.* 1a.**molcajete**, *n.* 1906

A mortar, usually made of stone or clay, used in Mexican cooking for pounding spices.

mole, *n.*⁷ 1891

A highly spiced Mexican sauce made chiefly from chilli peppers and chocolate and served with various meats, esp. poultry. Also as postmodifier designating a dish made with this sauce.

Montezuma 19171. **Montezuma quail** *n.* a plump, short-tailed quail, *Cyrtonyx montezumae* (family Odontophoridae), native to the southern United States and Mexico, the male of which has a bold black and white facial pattern. Also called *harlequin quail*, *Massena quail*. Cf. *Mearns quail* *n.* at MEARN'S *n.* 1.2. **Montezuma's revenge** *n.* (occas. also **Montezuma revenge**) *slang* diarrhoea suffered by travellers, esp. in Mexico.**nagual**, *n.* 1822

Among certain indigenous peoples of Mexico and surrounding countries: a guardian spirit in animal form, believed to accompany and guide an individual through life; an animal form believed to be assumed by a human through magical or supernatural means.

Nahua, *n.* and *adj.* 1875**A. n.**1. = NAHUATL *n.* 1.2. = NAHUATL *n.* 2. Cf. MEXICANO *n.* 2.**B. adj.** = NAHUATL *adj.***Nahuatl**, *adj.* and *n.* 1858**A. adj.** Of or relating to any of a group of American Indian peoples of southern Mexico and Central America, or their language.**B. n.**

1. A member of any of the Nahuatl peoples.

2. The Uto-Aztecan language of the Nahuatl, usually regarded as a group of related regional varieties; the branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family constituted by these. Cf. MEXICANO *n.* 2.**Nahuatlaca**, *n.* and *adj.* 1775**A. n.**1. = NAHUATL *n.* 1.2. = NAHUATL *n.* 2. *Obs.***B. adj.** = NAHUATL *adj.*

Nahuatlan, *n.* and *adj.* 1897**A. *n.***

1. = NAHUATL *n.* 1. *rare*.
2. The branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family that includes Nahuatl.

B. *adj.* Of or relating to the Nahuatl peoples or their language.**nopal**, *n.* 1578

Any prickly pear cactus of the genus *Opuntia* (including the former genus *Nopalea*); esp. *O. cochinellifera*, formerly cultivated as a food plant of the cochineal insect. More fully ***nopal cactus***.

Oaxacan, *n.* and *adj.* 1897**A. *n.*** A native or inhabitant of the state or city of Oaxaca in southern Mexico.**B. *adj.*** Of, belonging to, or characteristic of Oaxaca or its people.**ocelot**, *n.* 1774

1. A wild cat, *Felis pardalis*, having a tawny coat marked with numerous black rings, spots, and streaks, and found in forests and scrub from southern Texas to Argentina.

2. The skin or fur of the ocelot; a garment made of this. Freq. *attrib.*

ocote, *n.* 1787

A pine tree of upland areas of Mexico and Central America, yielding very resinous wood; spec. *Pinus oocarpa*. Also: the wood of this tree. Freq. *attrib.*

octli, *n.* 1787

Among the Aztecs: = PULQUE *n.*

Olmec, *n.* and *adj.* 1852**A. *n.***

1. A member of an American Indian people inhabiting the coast of southern Veracruz and western Tabasco during the 15th and 16th centuries; = OLMECA *n.* 1. Now *hist.* and *rare*.

2. *Archaeol.* A member of a prehistoric civilization, unrelated to the American Indian people, which flourished in the same area during the period c1500-400B.C. and is characterized by the style of its artefacts (see sense B. 2 and cf. OLMECA *n.* 2, OLMECAN *adj.*)

B. *adj.*

1. Of or relating to the American Indian Olmecs. *rare*.

2. *Archaeol.* Of or relating to the prehistoric Olmecs, their culture, or their characteristic artistic style, also found elsewhere in Southern Mexico. Cf. OLMECAN *adj.*

Olmeca, *n.* 1787

1. A member of an American Indian people inhabiting the coast of southern Veracruz and western Tabasco in Mexico during the 15th and 16th centuries, to where they probably migrated during the 12th cent. from the Mexican altiplano. Cf. OLMEC *n.* 1.

2. *Archaeol.* A member of a prehistoric civilization of the same area; = OLMEC *n.* 2. *rare*.

ololiuqui, *n.* 1894

A tropical American morning glory, *Turbina corymbosa* (family Convolvulaceae). Also: a psychoactive drug prepared from the seeds of this plant, used traditionally for ritual purposes by the Aztecs.

Otomi, *n.* and *adj.* 1782**A. *n.***

1. A member of an American Indian people inhabiting parts of central Mexico.

2. Any of the related Oto-Manguean languages of this people.

B. *adj.* Of, relating to, or designating the Otomi or their language.

oyamel, *n.* 1871

A large fir tree, *Abies religiosa*, found at high altitudes in Mexico, and used in carpentry and as a source of turpentine and balsamic medicinal oil. More fully ***oyamel fir***.

petaca, *n.* 1648

In Mexico and South America: (originally) a basket or coffer lined or covered with leather; (later) a leather trunk, bag, or pack; a leather tobacco pouch.

petate, *n.* 1843

In Central America and Cuba: a mat, esp. a sleeping mat, typically made of straw or dried palm leaves.

peyote, *n.* 1849

1. A hallucinogenic drug made from the cactus *Lophophora williamsii* (see sense 2), containing mescaline and used esp. in some Native American rituals. Cf. **MESCAL** *n.*

2. The cactus *Lophophora williamsii* itself, a small, soft, spineless, blue-green cactus native to northern Mexico and southern Texas.

pinacate, *n.* 1895

More fully ***pinacate beetle***, ***pinacate bug***. Any of several flightless black darkling beetles of the genus *Eleodes* found in the deserts of Arizona and northwestern Mexico, known for the foul-smelling liquid they emit when attacked. Cf. ***stink-bug*** *n.* at **STINK** *n.*

pinole, *n.* 1648

1. Flour made from parched corn, usually sweetened with ground mesquite beans, cacao, or with sugar, originally used in Mexico and south-western United States.

2. A mixture of vanilla and other aromatic powders used to flavour chocolate. *rare*.

3. Chiefly in Central America: a drink made from ground maize and other ingredients, esp. chocolate.

posole, *n.* 1699

1. In Mexican and Central American cooking: maize prepared by hulling, grinding, and boiling, for use in food or drink, hominy; (also) maize stew or soup made with this as the principal ingredient, typically also containing pork, beans, and red chilli.

2. A drink consisting of maize sourdough and water.

pulque, *n.* 1572

A drink made in Mexico and some parts of Central America from the fermented sap of the agave or maguey (*Agave americana*); = **OCTLI** *n.* Cf. **MESCAL** *n.* Although still made locally, pulque is rarely found outside the regions mentioned as the difficulty of storing and preserving it (see the etymology) renders export largely impracticable.

pupusa, *n.* 1948

In the cuisine of El Salvador: a thick maize flour tortilla filled with various ingredients before being fried.

quamoclit, *n.* 1633

Originally: the tropical American climbing plant *Ipomoea quamoclit* (family Convolvulaceae), with brilliant red flowers and deeply lobed leaves. Later also: (freq. with distinguishing word) any of various plants constituting the former genus *Quamoclit*; (also in form **Quamoclit**) the former genus itself. *Quamoclit* is now usually incorporated into the genus *Ipomoea*; it is still sometimes used as the name of a subgenus or section.

quetzal, *n.* 1800

1. Any of several Central and South American trogons of the genus *Pharomachrus*, the males of which are noted for their iridescent green plumage with red or yellow underparts; *esp.* (more fully

resplendent quetzal) *P. mocinno* of Central America, the male of which has extremely long tail coverts, and which was venerated by the Aztecs.

2. The principal monetary unit of Guatemala, introduced in 1925 and consisting of 100 centavos.

Quetzalcoatl, *n.* 1578

The plumed serpent god of the Toltec and Aztec civilizations, traditionally known as the god of the morning star, as well as (at various times and among various peoples) the patron of priests, inventor of books and of the calendar, the god of wind, and the symbol of death and resurrection.

sacate, zacate 1848

Any of several grasses grown in Mexico, the southern U.S.A., and the Philippines, and used for hay or fresh forage; fodder made from such a grass. Cf. next.

sotol 1881

A plant of dry regions belonging to the genus *Dasyliirion* of the family Agavaceæ, native to southwestern North America and bearing linear leaves and small white flowers; also, the fibre from the leaves of this plant or the beverage made from the sap.

tacamahac, tacamahaca 1577

1. An aromatic resin, used for incense, and formerly extensively in medicine. **a. orig.** That yielded by a Mexican tree, *Bursera (Elaphrium) tomentosa*. **b.** Extended in the West Indies and S. America to similar resins obtained from other species of *Bursera* and the allied genus *Protium*, and subsequently to resins imported from Madagascar, Bourbon, and the East Indies, chiefly the product of species of *Calophyllum*.

2. The resin of the buds of the N. American Balsam Poplar, *Populus balsamifera*; hence a name of this tree.

Tecoma 1846

A large genus of *Bignoniaceæ*, mostly natives of warm climates, consisting chiefly of shrubs (erect, climbing, or twining), with leaves usually pinnate, and showy trumpet-shaped flowers of various colours (chiefly different shades of yellow and red), whence the name *trumpet-flower*; many are cultivated in greenhouses, etc. for their beauty.

teguexin 1879

A large South American lizard of the genus *Tupinambis* or a similar member of the family Teiidae.

teocalli 1613

A structure for purposes of worship among the ancient Mexicans and Central Americans, usually consisting of a four-sided truncated pyramid built terrace-wise, and surmounted by a temple.

teonanacatl 1875

Any of several hallucinogenic fungi, esp. *Psilocybe mexicana*, found in Central America. Also *attrib.*

teopan 1891

A Mexican temple, a teocalli.

teosinte 1877

An annual grass of Central America, *Euchlæna luxurians*, of large size, allied to maize; now widely cultivated as a valuable fodder plant, sometimes also as a cereal.

tepache 1926

Any of several Mexican drinks of varying degrees of fermentation, typically made with pineapple, water, and brown sugar.

tilma 1851

A kind of simple cloak or blanket secured with a knot, worn by the Indians of Mexico.

tlachtli 1875

The ceremonial ball-game of the Aztecs; = POK-TA-POK. Also *attrib.*, as ***tlachtli-court***, ***-field***.

Tlapanec, *n.* (and *adj.*) 1875

a. An Indian people of south-west Guerrero, Mexico.

b. The language of this people, formerly classified as Hokan but now regarded as Otomanguean. Also *attrib.* or as *adj.* Also in *Comb.*, as ***Subtiaba-Tlapanec*** (see SUBTIABA).

toloache 1894

A preparation of a plant of the genus *Datura* used as an intoxicating and hallucinogenic drug.

Toltec (*n.* and *a.*) 1787

A. n. (A member of) a Nahuatl people who dominated the valley of Mexico *c* 900-1150 A.D., before the arrival of the Aztecs.

B. adj. Of or pertaining to this people. Hence ***Toltecan*** *n.* and *a.*

tomato 1604

1. a. The glossy fleshy fruit of a solanaceous plant (*Solanum Lycopersicum* or *Lycopersicum esculentum*), a native of tropical America, now cultivated as a garden vegetable in temperate as well as tropical lands. It varies when ripe from red to yellow in colour, and greatly in size and shape, the common form being irregularly spheroidal, while two smaller forms, considered by some as species, are named from their shape, *L. cerasiforme*, the cherry tomato, and *L. pyriforme*, the pear-shaped tomato. Formerly called *love-apple*, from supposed aphrodisiac qualities. Also the plant, an annual with a weak trailing or climbing stem, irregularly pinnate leaves, and yellow flowers resembling those of the potato.

Totonac 1787

An Indian people of east central Mexico; a member of this people. Also, their language. Also *attrib.*

Hence ***Totonacan*** *a.*, of or pertaining to the family of languages that comprises Totonac and Tepehua.

tule 1837

a. Either of two species of bulrush (*Scirpus lacustris* var. *occidentalis*, and *S. Tatora*) abundant in low lands along riversides in California; hence, a thicket of this, or a flat tract of land in which it grows.

Zapotec, *n.* and *a.* 1797

A. n. A member of an American Indian people of southern Mexico.

B. adj. Of or pertaining to the Zapotecs.

Hence ***Zapotecan*** *a.* and *n.*

zopilote 1787

A vulture of the family *Cathartidæ*, esp. the American carrion vulture or turkey-buzzard, *Cathartes aura*.

Appendix B

Etymological Notes for Nahuatl/Mexicano Loan Words in English

The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the following supplemental etymological notes for the Nahuatl-derived loan words presented in Appendix A.

ahuehuete, *n.* 1828 [Mex. Sp., ad. Nahuatl *ahuehuetl*, f. *huehue* old + *atl* water.]

atlatl 1871 [Indian (Nahuatl) *atlatl* spear-thrower.]

atole 1716 [Amer.-Sp., f. Nahuatl *atolli*.]

axolotl 1786 [the Aztec name.]

avocado 1697 [Sp. *avocado* advocate, substituted by 'popular etymology' for the Aztec *ahuacatl* (Tylor), of which a nearer form in Sp. is *aguacate*; F. *aguacat* and *avocat*, in Eng. also *avigato* and, corruptly, *alligator* (pear).]

cacao 1555 [Sp. *cacao*, ad. Mexican *caca-uatl* 'caca-tree'.]

cacomistle 1869 [Amer. Sp. *cacomixtle* (also used), f. Nahuatl *tlacomiztli*.]

camote 1842 [Mexican Sp., ad. Nahuatl *camotli*.]

chalchuite 1843 [f. the Mexican name of the stone, *chalchihuitl* + -ITE.].

chayote 1884 [a. Sp. *chayote*, ad. Nahuatl *chayotli*.]

chia, *n.*² 1832 [< Mexican Spanish *chía*, name of several different plants of the family Lamiaceae (1560) and its etymon Nahuatl *chia*, *chian*.]

Chicano, *n.* and *adj.* 1947 [a. Mexican Sp. alteration of Sp. *mejicano* Mexican.]

chicle, *n.* 1889 [Amer. Sp., ad. Nahuatl *tzictli*.]

chilli, **chilly** 1662 [In Sp. *chile*, *chili*, a. Mexican *chilli*, the native name in 16thc. Simeon *Dict. Langue Nahuatl*, has 'Chilli, piment dont on compte douze espèces principales; il sert à composer avec le maïs une boisson très-recherchée *chilli atolli*, *chillatolli*'. So 'chilatl eau de chilli', etc. As early as 1631, Bontius erroneously stated that the name was from Chile in S. America 'quasi dicas *piper a Chile*'.]

chinampa 1832 [Mexican: orig. 'raft'.]

chipotle, *n.* 1950 [< Mexican Spanish *chipotle* (1976 or earlier; 1953 or earlier as *chilpocle*; also as *chilpotle*) < Nahuatl *chil-* (in *chilli* CHILLI *n.*) + *poctli* smoke.]

chocolate 1604 [a. F. *chocolat*, Sp. *chocolate*, ad. Mexican *chocolatl* 'an article of food made of equal parts of the seeds of cacao and those of the tree called pochotl' [*Bombax ceiba*] Siméon *Dict. de langue Nahuatl*. *Chocolatl* has no connexion whatever with the Mexican word *cacauatl* 'cacao', or its modern corruption *cocoa*; but is, so far as is known, a radical word of the language. It is possible, however, that Europeans confounded *chocolatl* with *cacaua-atl*, which was really a drink made from cacao.]

cocoa 1672 [A corruption of CACAO, in 16-18th c. also written *cacao*, and sometimes in 18th c. *cacao*. *Cacao* was the Spanish adaptation of *cacauatl* (or rather of its combining form *cacaua-*), the

Mexican name of the cacao-seed. The word was orig. of 3 syllables, *ca'-ca-o*, *co'-co-a*, but the error of spelling *coco* as *cocoa* has led to the further corruption of pronouncing *cocoa* as *coco*.]

colin 1678

[Given by Hernandez as the ancient Mexican name of the genus *Ortyx* and its congeners. But the actual Mexican word was *çolin* or *zolin*; Molina, *Vocab. Mexicano y Castellano* (Mexico, 1571) has 'Çolin, codorniz'. *Colin* was thus app. an erroneous form, due to omission of the cedilla in printing. From the work of Hernandez (a1628) it passed into those of Nieremberg (1635), Willughby (1676), Ray (1678), Buffon, etc. It has no connexion with the Fr. *Colin* a popular name of a sea-gull (Belon, *Hist. Nat. Oyseaux*, 1555), with which it has by some been confused.]

conepatl 1774 [Native Mexican name: lit. 'little fox'; f. *conetl*, in comp. *cone-* 'child', prefixed to names of animals = 'young, little' + *epatl* fox. (Siméon.)]

copal 1577 [a. Sp. *copal* (F. *copal*, *copale*), ad. Mexican *copalli* incense (Molina, 1571), a fragrant translucent white resin which distils from a tree, thence called *copalquahuatl*, also by extension applied to any similar resin (Hernandez, 1651, III. i.).]

covote 1824 [a. Mexican Sp. *coyote*, ad. native Mexican *coyotl*.]

guacamole 1920 [Amer. Sp. *guacamole*, ad. Nahuatl *ahuacamolli*, f. *ahuacatl* avocado + *molli* sauce.]

guayule 1906 [a. Amer. Sp. *guayule*, f. Nahuatl *cuauhuli*.]

hule 1846 [Mexican Sp. (*h*)*ule*, Nahuatl *ulli* or *olli* caoutchouc.]

istle 1883 [Commercial corruption of the Mexican name *ixtli*.]

jacal 1838 [Mexican Sp., ad. Nahuatl *xacalli*.]

jalap 1675 [= F. *jalap*, ad. Sp. *jalapa*, in full *purga de Jalapa*, from *Jalapa* formerly *Xalapa*, a city of Mexico, in Aztec *Xalapān* (pronounced *ʃa'la'pa'n*), lit. 'sand by the water' f. *xalli* sand + *atl* water + *pan* upon. (Skeat in *Trans. Philol. Soc.* 1889.) Aztec names in *-an*, with accent on penult, uniformly lost the *n* in Spanish.]

jalapeño 1949 [Mexican Sp. (*chile*)*jalapeño* Jalapa chilli: see JALAP *n*.]

jicama, *n.* 1604 [Mexican Sp. *jicama*, ad. Nahuatl *xicama*.]

jicara 1859 [Amer. Sp. *jicara*, *jicaró*, ad. Nahuatl *xicalli*.]

mazame, *n.* 1791 [< French *mazame* (a1789 in Buffon) < Nahuatl *maçame* (recorded a1587 by Francisco Hernandez, as is *temamaçame* (compare quot. 1791 at main sense)), plural of *maçatl* deer. Compare Mexican Spanish *mazate*, from the singular form of the Nahuatl word. *N.E.D.* (1906) follows e.g. *Cent. Dict.* in giving the anglicized pronunciation (m^äz^ə·m) /m^əz^ə·m/ (which is now rare or obs.), but notes that 'the original word is' (mas^ä·me) /ma^s·me/. Compare **MAZAMA** *n*.]

Mazatec, *adj.* and *n.* 1892 [< Spanish *Mazateca* < Nahuatl *masa:te:ka* < *masa:* deer + *te:ka* ending denoting 'inhabitant of the place of - '.]

mecate, *n.* 1849 [< Mexican Spanish *mecate* < Nahuatl *mecatl* cord, rope.]

†**melt**, *n.*² 1605 [< Middle French *melt* (1584) < Nahuatl *metl* (1541 in Spanish texts from Mexico).]

mescal, *n.* 1709 [< American Spanish *mescal*, *mexcal*, *mezcal* (app. earliest c1745 in a compound ethnonym: see MESCALERO *n.*) and its etymon Nahuatl *mexcalli* (1577 in sense 'cooked (pieces of) agave leaf'; now only in sense 1b). *N.E.D.* (1906) records only a pronunciation with stress on the second syllable. The pronunciation with stress on the first syllable which is now the commonest in British usage probably arises from analogy with MESCALINE *n.*]

mesquite, *n.* 1759 [< Mexican Spanish *mezquite* (1591; 1577 in form *mizquite*) < Nahuatl *mizquitl* MIZQUITL. It is uncertain whether the form in quot. 1572 at sense 1a, which is earlier than the first attestation in Spanish and considerably earlier than those in English, represents the same word. The unusual form *mesketis* (only attested in the compound form *mesketis-bush*: see quot. 1887 for *mesquite bush* *n.* at Compounds 1a) is perhaps intended as a plural. *N.E.D.* (1906) also gives an alternative pronunciation, with the stress on the first syllable (me·skɪt) /mɛskiːt/.]

metate, *n.* 1625 [< Mexican Spanish *metate*, *métlatl* (both 1577 in a Spanish text from Mexico) < Nahuatl *metlatl*.]

Mexican, *n.* and *adj.* 1578 [< Spanish *mexicano*, noun and adjective (1541, now obs. in this form except in American Spanish; 1608 in form *mejicano*; 16th cent. in *lingua mexicana* denoting Nahuatl) < *México*, the name of a country in Central America and (orig.) of the city which is its capital (1519-26; of uncertain origin: perhaps < Nahuatl *Mexitli* one of the names of the Aztec god of war) + *-ano* = *AN* suffix. In form *Mexicaines* in quot. 1604 at sense A. 1, probably after French *Mexicain* (1588 in Middle French as noun; also as noun and adjective in Middle French in forms *Mexican* (1588) and *Mexiquain* (1584)).]

milpa, *n.* 1648 [< Mexican Spanish *milpa* (1568 in this sense; 1552-3 in plural form *milpas* in sense 'property, estates') < Nahuatl *milpan* < *mil-* (in *milli* cultivated field) + *-pan* (postposition) on the surface of, in, on.]

Mixe, *n.* and *adj.* 1616 [< Mexican Spanish *mixe*, noun (1526; 1674 in form *mije*) and adjective (1729 or earlier), perhaps < Nahuatl *mīxītl* (in *mīxītl* an intoxicating herb).]

Mixteca, *n.* and *adj.* 1787 [< Spanish *mixteca* (1541; also 1545 *asmisteca*) < Nahuatl *mixtecah*, lit. 'people from a cloudy location'. Compare Italian *Mixtechi*, plural (1780 in the passage translated in quot. 1787 at sense A. 1).
The *Mixteca* is frequently used as the name of the region in western Oaxaca where this people lives.]

Mixteco, *n.* and *adj.* 1911 [< Spanish *mixteco* (1541; also 1629 as *misteco*) < Nahuatl *mixtecah* (see MIXTECA *n.* and *adj.*).]

mizquitl, *n.* 1753 [< Nahuatl *mizquitl*, perhaps after Mexican Spanish *mizquitl* (in A. de Molina *Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y Mexicana* (1571)).]

molcajete, *n.* 1906 [< Mexican Spanish *molcajete* (1827) < Nahuatl *mo:lcaxitl*.]

mole, *n.*⁷ 1891 [< Mexican Spanish *mole* (1577) < Nahuatl *mo:lili* sauce, broth, gravy, mole.]

Montezuma [< the name of *Montezuma* II (1466-1520), Aztec ruler at the time of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. In sense 1, after scientific Latin *montezumae*, specific name of *Ortyx* (now *Cyrtonyx*) *montezumae* (N. A. Vigors 1830, in *Zool. Jnrl.* 5 275).]

nagual, *n.* 1822 [< Mexican Spanish *nagual*, *nahual* sorcerer, companion < Nahuatl *nahualli* guardian spirit residing in an animal.]

Nahua, *n.* and *adj.* 1875 [< Nahuatl *Nahua*, stem form and plural of Nahuatl *NAHUATL* *adj.* and *n.* < *nahua* sonorous, pleasing to the ear.]

Nahuatl, *adj.* and *n.* 1858 [< Spanish *Náhuatl* and its etymon Nahuatl *Nahuatl*, lit. 'person or thing that pleases the ear' < *Nahua* (see NAHUA *n.* and *adj.*) + *-tl*, singular noun suffix. Compare earlier NAHUATLACA *n.* and *adj.*

Modern Nahuatl is divided into three regional groups: the central and northern Aztec dialects retain the consonant group *tl* (hence the form *Nahuatl*); the eastern Aztec dialects have replaced the consonant group *tl* with *t* (hence the form *Nahuat*); while the western dialects have replaced the consonant group *tl* with *l* (hence the form *Nahual*).]

Nahuatlaca, *n.* and *adj.* 1775 [< Nahuatl *Nahuatlaca*, stem form and plural of *Nahuatlacatl* a Nahuatl-speaking person < *Nahua* (see NAHUA *n.* and *adj.*) + *tlaca* person + *-tl*, singular noun suffix. With form *Nahuatlague* (see quot. 1858 at sense A. 2) compare French *Nahuatlague* (1811 in passage translated in quot. 1811 at sense A. 1).]

Nahuatlan, *n.* and *adj.* 1897 [< NAHUATL *n.* + *-AN* suffix.]

nopal, *n.* 1578 [< Spanish *nopal* (1552 in the passage translated in quot. 1578 at main sense) < Nahuatl *nopalli* cactus, collective name for all *Opuntia* species. Compare NOPALES *n.* Compare (< Spanish) French *nopal* (1584), Portuguese *nopal* (18th cent.), Italian *nopale*.

The Nahuatl compound *nopalnocheztl*, given in some dictionaries as the source of *nopal* or *Nopalea*, is in fact the name for cochineal (Nahuatl *nochetztl* < *nochtli* *Opuntia* + *eztl* blood).

Oaxacan, *n.* and *adj.* 1897 [< the name of *Oaxaca* (Spanish *Oaxaca*, Nahuatl *Hua:xacac*), a city and state in Southern Mexico + *-AN* suffix.]

ocelot, *n.* 1774 [< French *ocelot* (1765 in Buffon) < Spanish *ocelote* and its etymon Nahuatl *ocelotl* jaguar (1571 in A. de Molina *Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y Mexicana*). Nahuatl *tlalocelotl*, lit. 'field jaguar' (< *tlalli* earth, field + *ocelotl* jaguar) is first recorded in Francisco Hernández *Noua Plantarum, Animalium et Mineralium Mexicanorum Historia* (1651), but *ocelotl* had already been cited in a French text as an Aztec word by J. de Laet *L'Hist. du Nouveau Monde* (1640). *Ocelotl* is recorded earlier in English as the name of a day (represented by the tiger or jaguar) in the ancient Aztec calendar. Compare:

ocote, *n.* 1787 [< Mexican Spanish and Central American Spanish *ocote* (1541 or earlier) < Nahuatl *ocotl* pine (*Pinus*), torch or kindling made from this. In quot. 1787 translating Italian *Ocote* (1780). The Nahuatl form *ocotl* is also occas. found in historical English contexts, with reference to the use made of it by the Aztecs.]

octli, *n.* 1787 [< Nahuatl *octli* alcoholic drink, the fermented juice of the maguey, pulque.]

Olmec, *n.* and *adj.* 1852 [In senses A. 1 and B. 1 shortened either < Nahuatl *Olmeca* OLMECA *n.*, or directly < OLMECA *n.* In senses A. 2 and B. 2 partly after Spanish *Olmego* (see OLMECAN *adj.*).]

Olmeca, *n.* 1787 [< Nahuatl *Olmeca* (plural of *Olmecatl*), lit. 'inhabitants of the rubber country', with reference to the rubber trees which grew abundantly in this region of the Mexican Gulf Coast. Compare Italian *Olmechi*, plural (1780 in the passage translated in quot. 1787 at sense 1).]

ololiuqui, *n.* 1894 [< Nahuatl *ololiuhqui*, lit. 'round thing', referring to the spherical seeds of the plant (1651 in Francisco Hernández *Noua Plantarum, Animalium et Mineralium Mexicanorum Historia*) < *olol-* round, spherical + *-ihqui*, suffix meaning 'like'. In form *ololiuque* after Spanish *ololiuque* (1942).]

Otomi, *n.* and *adj.* 1782 [< Mexican Spanish *Otomí* (1560; 1519-26 in plural *otomíes*, 1553 as *otomix* denoting the people, *otomitlh*, *otomilh* denoting the language) < Nahuatl *otomih*, plural of *otomitl*. With the form *Othomi* compare Spanish *othomí* (1770 in an isolated attestation).]

oyamel, *n.* 1871 [< Mexican Spanish *oyamel* < Nahuatl *oyametl* fir tree (1571).]

petaca, *n.* 1648 [< Spanish *petaca* (mid 16th cent.) < Nahuatl *petlācalli* woven wicker hamper or coffer, perhaps < *petlatl* woven mat (see PETATE *n.*) + *ācalli* boat.]

petate, *n.* 1843 [< Spanish *petate* (1541 or earlier) < Nahuatl *petlatl*.]

peyote, *n.* 1849 [< Spanish *peyote* (17th cent.; in 20th cent. also *peyotl*) and its etymon Nahuatl *peyotl* peyote cactus.]

pinacate, *n.* 1895 [< Mexican Spanish *pinacate* < Nahuatl *pinacatl* (both 1571 in A. de Molina *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana*).

Compare the following earlier isolated borrowing of Nahuatl *pinacatl* via Italian *pinacatl* (1780 in the passage translated in the following quot.): 1787 C. CULLEN tr. F. S. Clavigero *Hist. Mexico* I. I. 67 The beetles are of several kinds, and mostly harmless. Some of them are of a green colour, and are called by the Mexicans, *Majatl*. There are others black, of a disagreeable smell and irregular form, which are called *Pinacatl*.]

pinole, *n.* 1648 [< Spanish *pinole* maize flour, a drink made from this (1591; 1576-1577 as *pinolli*, also as *pinol* (16th cent. in the passage translated in quot. 1917 at sense 2, subsequently from the 20th cent.)), aromatic powder (1737) < Nahuatl *pinolli* maize flour for making drinks, the drink made from this.]

posole, *n.* 1699 [< Mexican Spanish *pozole* (1775-6 or earlier; also in forms *posol*, *posole*, *pozol*) and its etymon Nahuatl *pozolli* stew or drink based on maize (see below). In quot. 1699 at sense 1 perhaps directly < Nahuatl, although the Anglicized form *poorsoul* mentioned in it suggests an intermediate disyllabic form such as is found in Spanish. This form is probably unconnected with later (rare) U.S. regional *poor soul* in sense 'corn dumpling'.]

pulque, *n.* 1572 [< Central American Spanish *pulque* (1524), probably < Nahuatl *pulihki* decomposed, spoiled (in *octli pulihki* spoiled octli, *octli* being the name of the drink in Nahuatl: see OCTLI *n.*), spec. sense development of *polihki*, *pulihki* lost, condemned (1571 as *polihqui* in A. de Molina *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana*). It is likely that *octli pulihki*, referring to spoiled pulque, was frequently used in Nahuatl (given that pulque easily spoils if not drunk within 24 to 36 hours), and that the adjective was then misapprehended by Spanish speakers as the name of the drink. See further J. Corominas *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico* (1981) s.v. and C. A. Robelo *Diccionario de Aztequismos* (ed. 3, c1950) 450-4. Compare French *pulque* (1765). *N.E.D.* (1909) gives the non-naturalized pronunciation (pu·lke) /pulke/.]

pupusa, *n.* 1948 [< American Spanish (El Salvador) *pupusa* tortilla made with maize or rice flour and filled with pork cracklings, cheese, or other ingredients (1916; also *popusa*) < Pipil *pupu:sah* (ult. < Nahuatl *popōtzoā* to puff out, thicken, swell), the tortilla being so called on account of its shape. Pipil is an Aztec language spoken by a now very small number of people in El Salvador; it is descended from Nahuatl.]

quamoclit, *n.* 1633 [< post-classical Latin *quamoclit* (1588 (in the source referred to in quot. 1633) or earlier; also 1611 or earlier as *quamochlit*) < Nahuatl *qua'mochitl* (*ch* = /tʃ/) (R. Siméon *Dictionnaire de la langue Nahuatl* (1885); not recorded in modern dictionaries of Nahuatl), app. < *qua-* (in *quauitl* (now *cuahuitl*) tree) + *-mochitl*, of unknown meaning (not otherwise recorded in dictionaries of Nahuatl). Adopted into scientific Latin as a specific epithet (Linnaeus *Species plantarum* (1753) I. 159) and later used as a genus name (C. Moench *Methodus Plantas Horti Botanici et Agri Marburgensis* (1794) 453).]

quetzal, *n.* 1800 [< Mexican Spanish *quetzal* (a1575 in the source translated in quot. 1800 at sense 1) < Nahuatl *quetzalli* a tail-feather of the bird called *quetzaltototl* (< the combining form of *quetzalli* + *tototl* bird). Compare the following earlier use of the Nahuatl word in an English context: 1625 tr. in S. Purchas *Pilgrimes* II. V. vii. 1096 Item, 80. handfults of greene rich feathers, which they call Queçaly.]

Quetzalcoatl, *n.* 1578 [< Nahuatl *quetzalli* (see QUETZAL *n.*) + *coatl* snake; orig. via Spanish *Quetzalcóatl* (1554 in the passage translated in quot. 1578 as *Queçalcouatlh*). Compare Middle French *Quezalcoatl* (1584; also *Quezalconatl*, *Quezalcoconatl*).]

sacate, **zacate** 1848 [ad. Mexican Sp. *zacate* grass, hay, ad. Nahuatl *çacatl*, *zacatl* grass, reed.]

sotol 1881 [Amer. Sp., f. Nahuatl *tzotolli*.]

tacamahac 1577 [ad. obs. Sp. *tacamahaca*, in Hernandez 1614 *thecomahaca*, ad. Aztec *tecomahiyac*; mod.Sp. *tacamaca*. Cf. Monardes 1579 'ex Nova Hispania..ab Indis *tacamahaca* vocatum'. In F. *tacamaque*. *Tacamahac* is the more usual form, and that recognized in North America in sense 2.]

Tecoma 1846 [mod.L. (Jussieu 1789), from Aztec *tecomaxochitl*, mistakenly supposed by Jussieu to be the name of a species of the genus to which he gave this name (but really the native name of *Solandra guttata*, N.O. *Solanaceæ*). The **Aztec** name is a compound of *tecomatl* + *xochitl* 'rose, flower'; the plant being named from the resemblance of its flower to that of the *tecomatl* or Calabash-tree (*Crescentia Cujete*, N.O. *Bignoniaceæ*), lit. 'pot-tree', f. *tecomatl* earthen vessel, pot.]

teguexin 1879 [ad. Aztec *tecoixin*, *tecouxin*, a lizard.]

teocalli 1613 [Mexican *teocalli*, f. *teotl* god + *calli* house.]

teonanacatl 1875 [a. Nahuatl, f. *teotl* god + *nancatl* mushroom.]

teopan 1891 [Shortened from Mex. *teo-*, *teupantli* temple, f. *teotl* god + *pantli* wall.]

teosinte 1877 [In F. *téosinté* (*Bull. Soc. d'Acclim.* 1871, 38), ad. Mex. *teocintli* 'seu spica Maizii montana' (Hernandez *Op.* 1790, II. 120), app. f. *teotl* god + *cintli*, *centli* dry ear or cob of maize. In Ramirez *Sinon. Plant. Mex.* 67 *teoxintli*.]

tepache 1926 [Mexican Sp., ad. Nahuatl *tepiatl*.]

tilma 1851 [Mexican Sp., ad. Nahuatl *tilmatli*, in comb. *tilma-*.]

tlachtli 1875 [Nahuatl.]

Tlapanec, *n.* (and *adj.*) 1875 [ad. Sp. *tlapaneca*, *tlapaneco*, ad. Nahuatl (Aztec) *tlapanecatli*.]

toloache 1894 [a. Mexican Sp. *toloache*, a. Nahuatl *toloatzin*, f. *toloa* to bow the head + *tzin* reverential.]

Toltec (*n.* and *a.*) 1787 [ad. Sp. *tolteca*, ad. Nahuatl *toltecatl*, pl. *tolteca*.]

tomato 1604 [In 17th c. *tomate*, a. F. *tomate* (2 syll.) fem., or Sp. and Pg. *tomate* (3 syll.) masc., ad. Mex. *tomatl*. *Tomato* is an English alteration, app. assumed to be Spanish, or perh. after *potato*; *tomata* a later change, app. assuming a Sp. **tomata* like *patata*; *tomatum*, *-us* are erroneous latinizations.]

Totonac 1787 [ad. Sp. *Totonaca*, f. Nahuatl *Totonacatl*, pl. *Totonaca*.]

tule 1837 [ad. Aztec *tullin*, the final *n* being dropped by the Spaniards as in *Guatemala*, *Jalapa*, etc.]

Zapotec, *n.* and *a.* 1797 [ad. Sp. *zapoteco*, *zapoteca*, ad. Nahuatl *tzapoteca*, pl. of *tzapotecatl*, lit. 'person of the place of the sapodilla'.]

zopilote 1787 [Sp., a. Mexican *azopilotl*.]

Appendix C

English Borrowings Improbably Attributed to Nahuatl

The OED lists two English words as possible Nahuatl loans but for which I find a lack of compelling evidence to support such a conclusion. These are *marijuana* and *Subtiaba*. I will give the OED entries for and discuss each in turn. The OED definition for *marijuana* is as follows:

marijuana, *n.* 1894

1. a. A preparation of the cannabis plant *Cannabis sativa* subsp. *indica*, for use as an intoxicating and hallucinogenic drug; *esp.* a crude preparation of the dried leaves, flowering tops, and stem of the plant in a form for smoking. The currency of the word increased greatly in the United States in the 1930s in the context of the debate over the use of the drug, the term being preferred as a more exotic alternative to the familiar words *hemp* and *cannabis*.

2. The cannabis plant *Cannabis sativa* subsp. *indica*; = **CANNABIS** *n.* 1.

The OED's etymological notes state the following:

marijuana, *n.** 1894 [< Mexican Spanish *mariguana*, *marihuana*, of uncertain origin. It has been suggested that the Spanish word is < **Nahuatl** *mallihuan* 'prisoner'. Forms in *-j-* appear to be an English innovation (attested later also in French): occasional recent examples in Spanish probably show English influence. Influence of a folk etymology from the Spanish personal name *María-Juana* or its familiar form *Mari-Juana* has frequently been suggested; if so this would appear to have occurred within English.]

That the English word is derived from the Spanish, and that its use was promoted to "exoticize" it (and its users), is not in doubt. What I would like to question here, however, is any connection to the Nahuatl term *mallihuan* 'prisoner'. While the phonetic forms of these two words are indeed similar, I see no semantic basis for connecting the two terms. The connection of this plant with illegality and hence 'prisoners' is something that only occurred later. Therefore, I regard this as a case of accidental homophony and, until additional positive evidence is brought forth, I reject *marijuana* as being a possible Nahuatl loan word. The second term is *Subtiaba*, defined as follows:

Subtiaba 1891

a. (A member of) an Indian people of western Nicaragua.

b. The Tlapanec language of this people (no longer spoken), formerly considered to have Hokan affinities but now regarded as Otomanguan. Formerly also **Subti'aban**. Also *Comb.*, as **Subtiaba-Tlapanec**, a group of related central American Indian languages, including Subtiaba.

Subtiaba 1891 [The name of a village, (San Juan Bautista de) *Subtiaba*, earlier *Sutiaba*, (see quot. 1891): perh. of Nahuatl origin.]

I doubt the etymology given for this word on the basis of its not having characteristic Nahuatl-derived phonology. For example, where does the phoneme /b/ come from? Also, the word-medial /bt/ consonant cluster is quite unusual. While it might be possible that such a form is ultimately derived from Nahuatl, I would like to see positive evidence presented in favor of such a conclusion.

Appendix D

English Borrowings Previously But Spuriously Connected to Nahuatl

The OED gives the following etymological discussions which involve previous attributions of entries to a Nahuatl origin, but which are now known to either be spurious or are otherwise placed in serious doubt.

†**mesteque** 1667

Obs. A kind of fine, dark-grained cochineal.

[Origin uncertain. Perhaps < a Mexican toponym (compare quot. *a1589* at main sense), perhaps < *Misteca* (from 1558 in Spanish sources), variant of *Mixteca*, the name of the ancient Mexican province corresponding to the present Oaxaca (compare MIXTEC *n.*), although this would not accord well with the geography implied in quot. *a1589* at main sense. Compare Spanish *cochinilla mestiza* denoting a variety of the cochineal insect (1787 in E. Terreros y Pando *Dicc. Castellano*; in a cross-reference given also in spelling *mestica*).]

mitla, *n.* *a1925.*

An unidentified mammal said to inhabit forests on the borders of Bolivia and Brazil.

[Origin unknown. Nahuatl *mitla* 'fortified hilltop' is unconnected.]

pauxi, *n.* 1678

Any of several curassows. Now chiefly (in form **Pauxi**): a genus comprising the (northern) helmeted curassow, *Pauxi pauxi*, of Venezuela and Colombia, and the related *P. unicornis*.

[Origin uncertain; perhaps < post-classical Latin *pauxi* (see below) or American Spanish †*pauxi* (1605 in an Ecuadorian source), *pauji* (1629 in a Central American source from Guatemala or Honduras), perhaps ult. < either Quechua or a Mayan language. Compare also (in a Cariban language) Chaima *paoxi* bird, which may however be < American Spanish. It has also been suggested that the name is a local derivative of Spanish *pavo* turkey. Compare scientific Latin *Pauxi* (or *Pauxis*: see note below). Compare also POWIS *n.* The word was recorded *a1587* by Francisco Hernandez, app. as a local Mexican (Nahuatl) name; no evidence of Nahuatl origin has however been found. Compare the following earlier examples of post-classical Latin *pauxi*, perhaps representing the ablative corresponding to a nominative *pauxis* (the works of F. Hernandez (1517-87) were chiefly published posthumously):

1635 J. EUSEBIUS NIEREMBERGIUS *Hist. Nat.* X. lxxv. 233 De pauxi. Pauxi gallinaceum aequat aut superat... Ad aulam Philippicam allatam pauxin sic describit Franciscus Hernandus. **1649** F. HERNANDEZ *Rerum Medicarum Thes.* II. ccxxii. 56 (*heading*) De Pauxi vocata ave.

Valid publication as a genus name: C. J. Temminck in *Hist. Nat. Gén. des Pigeons et Gallinacés* (1813) II. 456, after earlier valid publication as specific name (in the genus *Crax*) by Linnaeus in *Systema Naturae* (ed. 12, 1766) 270. The genus name was spelt *Pauxis* by some 19th-cent. writers. American Spanish *pauji* is now used, usu. with distinguishing word, for various species of curassow.]

Appendix E

Indigenous Mexican Loanwords, Possibly of Nahuatl Origin

The following terms are listed as deriving from Mexican Spanish by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and in some cases further note is made that they are ultimately of indigenous Mexican origin. I include them here because they could possibly involve a Nahuatl origin, although I have no positive evidence that they do. I leave the issue of confirmation one way or the other for future research.

amole 1831

The root or bulb of any one of several plants found in Mexico and California, used as a detergent; also any of such plants, esp. *Chlorogalum pomeridianum*, called also *soap-plant* (see SOAP n. 6b). Also *attrib.*

[Mexican Sp.]

⇒ Watson (1938: 120) suggests the following Nahuatl etymology for *amole*:

amole < Nah. *amolli* – *a-* ‘water’ + *-molli* ‘a saponaceous vegetable substance’

copalche 1866

A shrub of Mexico and Central America, *Croton pseudo-China* or *niveus*, family Euphorbiaceae, yielding the **copalchi-bark**, used as a febrifuge, as a substitute for quinine; also a Brazilian tree *Strychnos pseudo-China*, to the bark of which the same properties have been ascribed.

[The native Mexican name.]

mariachi 1929

A. n. A small group of Mexican strolling musicians who perform traditional folk music; any band performing the type of music associated with such groups; the music played by such musicians. Also: a member of such a group; a Mexican folk musician.

B. adj. Of, relating to, or designating mariachis or the type of Mexican folk music associated with mariachis.

[< Mexican Spanish *mariachi* (also in form *mariache*) street musician, mariachi musician (1852 in sense

‘open-air entertainment involving music and dancing’), further etymology uncertain. The word is plausibly attributed to the former Uto-Aztecan language of the district of Cocula in the Mexican province of Jalisco, where modern mariachi music originated. See H. Rafael *Origen e Historia del Mariachi* (ed. 2, 1983), 63 ff.]

palapa 1957

A traditional Mexican rustic shelter, roofed with palm leaves or branches; (also) the palm leaves or branches used in such a construction. Hence: any structure built in imitation of this, esp. on a beach.

[< Mexican Spanish *palapa* (c1975 in sense ‘shelter roofed with palm leaves or branches’; 1929 or earlier in sense ‘leaves or branches of the tree *Orbignya cohune*’), of unknown origin.]

saguaro 1856

A large branching cactus, *Carnegiea gigantea*, found in desert regions of southwestern North America.

[? Mexican.]

shack, *n.*³ 1878

1. a. A roughly built cabin or shanty of logs, mud, etc. Also applied to other similar structures.

[Of obscure origin. The late J. Platt, Jun., suggested (*N. & Q.* Ser. x. XII. 306/2) that the source might be the Mexican *jacal*, Aztec *xacalli*, wooden hut. Cf. SHACKLE *n.*³]

tamal 1856

A Mexican delicacy, made of crushed Indian corn, flavoured with pieces of meat or chicken, red pepper, etc., wrapped in corn-husks and baked.

[Mexican Sp. *ta'mal*, pl. *tamales* (-'ales).]

⇒ Watson (1938: 117) suggests the following Nahuatl etymology for *tamal*: tamal or tamale (earlier tamauli) < Nah. *tamalli* (cp. *nixtamal* – See Appendix G)

tapayaxin 1753

The orbicular horned lizard, *Phrynosoma orbiculare*, incorrectly called the *horned frog* or *toad*.

[Native Mexican.]

tequila 1849

a. A gin-like Mexican spirit made by distilling the fermented sap of a maguey, *Agave tequilana*; cf. MESCAL.

[a. Mexican Sp., f. the name of a town which is one of the centres of its production.]

⇒ Watson (1938: 118) suggests the following Nahuatl etymology for *tequila*:

tequila (or tequila) < Mexican city *Tequila*, < Nah. *Tequilan* 'the place of the divide'

toyon 1876

The Californian Holly, *Heteromeles (Photinia) arbutifolia*, N.O. *Rosaceæ*.

[a. Mexican Sp. *tollon* (to 'on), the native name.]

tuza 1787

A Mexican pocket-gopher or pouched rat: a rodent, formerly supposed to be a kind of mole.

[a. Sp. *tuza*, ad. Mexican *tuçan* or *tozan*, the native name.]

Appendix F

Citations for OED Entries

The following citations for individual entries are accurate as of September, 2008.

ahuehuete, *n.* ADDITIONS SERIES 1997

amole SECOND EDITION 1989

atlatl SECOND EDITION 1989

atole SECOND EDITION 1989

avocado SECOND EDITION 1989

axolotl SECOND EDITION 1989

cacao SECOND EDITION 1989

cacomistle SECOND EDITION 1989

camote SECOND EDITION 1989

chayote SECOND EDITION 1989

chia, *n.*² DRAFT ENTRY Sept. 2007

Chicano, *n.* and *a.* SECOND EDITION 1989

chicle, *n.* SECOND EDITION 1989

chilli, **chilly** SECOND EDITION 1989

chipotle, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY June 2004

chinampa SECOND EDITION 1989

chocolate SECOND EDITION 1989

cocoa SECOND EDITION 1989

colin SECOND EDITION 1989

conepatl SECOND EDITION 1989

copal SECOND EDITION 1989

copalche, **-chi** SECOND EDITION 1989

covote SECOND EDITION 1989

guacamole SECOND EDITION 1989

guayule SECOND EDITION 1989

hule SECOND EDITION 1989

istle SECOND EDITION 1989

jacal SECOND EDITION 1989

jalap SECOND EDITION 1989

jalapeño ADDITIONS SERIES 1993

jicama, *n.* ADDITIONS SERIES 1997

jicara SECOND EDITION 1989

mariachi, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT REVISION Dec. 2000

marijuana, *n.** DRAFT REVISION June 2008

mazame, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

Mazatec, *adj.* and *n.* DRAFT REVISION Mar. 2001

mecate, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2001

†melt, *n.*² DRAFT REVISION June 2001

mescal, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

mesquite, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

mesteque, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

metate, *n.* DRAFT REVISION Mar. 2008

Mexican, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT REVISION Sept. 2008

milpa, *n.* DRAFT REVISION Mar. 2002

Mixe, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT ENTRY June 2008

Mixteca, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT ENTRY June 2008

Mixteco, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT ENTRY Sept. 2002

mizquitl, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

molcajete, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY Sept. 2002

mole, *n.*⁷ DRAFT REVISION Sept. 2002

Montezuma, *n.* DRAFT REVISION Dec. 2007

nagual, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY June 2003

Nahua, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT REVISION June 2003

Nahuatl, *adj.* and *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

Nahuatlaca, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT REVISION Sept. 2008

Nahuatlan, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT REVISION Mar. 2008

nopal, *n.* DRAFT REVISION Sept. 2008

Oaxacan, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

ocelot, *n.* DRAFT REVISION Mar. 2004

ocote, *n.* DRAFT REVISION Dec. 2007

octli, *n.* DRAFT REVISION Mar. 2004

Olmec, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

Olmeca, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY Dec. 2007

ololiuqui, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2004

Otomi, *n.* and *adj.* DRAFT REVISION Mar. 2008

oyamel, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY Dec. 2007

palapa, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY June 2008

pauxi, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

petaca, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY June 2008

petate, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY Dec. 2005

pevote, *n.* DRAFT REVISION Dec. 2005

pinacate, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY June 2006

pinole, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2007

posole, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY June 2008

pulque, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

pupusa, *n.* DRAFT ENTRY Sept. 2007

quamoclit, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

quetzal, *n.* DRAFT REVISION June 2008

Quetzalcoatl, *n.* DRAFT REVISION Dec. 2007

sacate, **zacate** SECOND EDITION 1989

saguaro, *n.* SECOND EDITION 1989

shack, *n.*³ SECOND EDITION 1989

sotol SECOND EDITION 1989

Subtiaba SECOND EDITION 1989

tacamahac SECOND EDITION 1989

tamal SECOND EDITION 1989

tapavaxin SECOND EDITION 1989

Tecoma SECOND EDITION 1989

teguexin SECOND EDITION 1989

teocalli SECOND EDITION 1989

teonanacatl SECOND EDITION 1989

tepache SECOND EDITION 1989

tequila SECOND EDITION 1989

tilma SECOND EDITION 1989

tlachtli SECOND EDITION 1989

Tlapanec, *n.* (and *adj.*) SECOND EDITION 1989

toloache SECOND EDITION 1989

Toltec (*n.* and *a.*) SECOND EDITION 1989

Totonac SECOND EDITION 1989

toyon SECOND EDITION 1989

tule SECOND EDITION 1989

tuza SECOND EDITION 1989

Zapotec, *n.* and *a.* SECOND EDITION 1989

Appendix G

Nahuatl Loan Words Identified by Watson (1938)

Watson (1938) lists many words of Nahuatl origin in American English. I include his complete list here, indicating his definitions and proposed etymologies for words that are not included in the OED, along with the page number reference for each word. Words that are also listed in the OED as having Nahuatl etymologies are marked with an asterisk (*), and the definitions and etymologies for these are not repeated here (refer to Appendices A and B above). Watson's words that are listed in the OED but which are *not* noted as having Nahuatl etymologies are marked with the crosshatch (#).

anacahuitap.111

'a small tree (*Cordia boissieri*) found on the lower Rio Grande, the wood as well as the leaf and fleshy fruit being used medicinally in throat and chest complaints by Mexican natives of Texas' < Nah. *anacahuitl*, *quahuitl* 'tree'

anaqua also: *knackaway* p.111

'a green-leaved tree of the borage family (*Ehretia elliptica*)'

cp. anacahuita

amole p.119

'a substance obtained by pounding the roots of the yucca or Spanish bayonet'

< Nah. *amolli*, *a-* 'water' + *-molli* 'a saponaceous vegetable substance'

*atolep.116

*avocadop.109

*axolotl p.109

ayacahuitap.111

'a pine tree (*Pinus strobiformis*) of the Southwest, otherwise called the Mexican white pine'

< Nah. *ayacuahuatl* or *ayauhquauitl*. cp. anacahuita

*cacaop.108

*cacomistlep.118

cacomite p.116

'a species of *Tigridia* from which a good flour is prepared' (from Bartlett 1859)

< Nah. *cacomitl* 'a root that has a chestnut-like taste'

*camote p.116

capules p.115

'a rosaceous shrub or small tree bearing blackish red or deepish yellow edible berries of an agreeable odor'

< Nah. *capulin* 'the cherry-tree or its fruit'

chacalac p.119

'The Texan guan (*Ortalis vetula maccalli*)'

< Nah. *chacalaca* 'imitative term signifying the cackling of a bird'

chacatep.111

'A small bush known to botanists as *Krameria canescens* or *grayi*, in various parts of Texas'

< Nah. *chacatl*

*chia p.115

chicalote p.111

'The white-flowered thorn-poppy (*Argemone platyceras*), found in southern California'

< Nah. *chicalotl* 'a spiny herb'

*chicle p.120

chilacayote also, *chicayote*, *chilicothe* p.116

‘Several species of gourds having fruits with an edible pulp (especially eaten as a dessert), found in various southwestern States’

< Nah. *tzilacayotli*, *tzilac* ‘flat, smooth’ + *ayotli* ‘gourd’

chilaquiles p.116

‘A vegetable dish seasoned with chilchotes’

< Nah. *chilaquiltil*, *chilli* ‘chile’ + *quiltil* ‘an edible herb’

chilchote p.116

‘A Texan word signifying “green or sweet peppers”’

< Nah. *chilchotl* ‘green or sweet peppers’

*chile also *chili*, *chilli* p.109

chiltapin also: *chiltepin*, *chilchipines* p.112

‘Bird-pepper (*Capiscum baccatum*), pungent red oval berries of this plant were [and still are – JH] prized as a condiment’

< Nah. *chilli* + *tecpin* ‘flea’

*chocolate p.109

claco also: *tlaco*, *tlacp*.121

‘In reference to Mexican money found in Texas. “This word is derived from Mexican Spanish *tlaco* or *claco*, denoting ‘half’, from the fact that the coin has half the value of the *quartilla*.”’

< *tlaco* ‘half’, see also cacomistle

comal p.120

‘A slightly concave utensil of stone or earthenware, or more recently an iron dish, for the purpose of baking tortillas’

< Nah. *comalli* ‘a crude form of earthenware griddle’

*conepatla also: *conepate* p.109

*copal p.108

*coyote p.118

coyotillo p.112

“The beautiful-leaved west Texas shrub *Karwinskia humboldtiana*, [which] bears blackish edible berries or fleshy drupes, the eating of which is popularly supposed to cause paralysis of the lower extremities, but to be harmless if the small, round seed is rejected. In Mexican folk-lore it is held that the coyote, while fond of the berry, rejects the seed as pernicious: hence the name, formed from *coyote*. . . plus the Spanish diminutive *-illo*.”

< Sp. *coyote* + *-illo* DIM

#enchilada p.117

esquite p.117

‘pop-corn sweetened’, synonymous with tequesquite

< Nah. *izquitl* < *icequi* ‘to roast corn or chickpeas on a flat earthenware dish’

#hoactzin also, *hoatzin* p.109

“The remarkable bird *Opisthocomus hoazin* or *O. cristatus*, inhabiting tropical America, has been known in English since 1661 as the *hoactzin* or *hoatzin* and (from the fetid smell of the male) later as the stinkbird”.

< Nah. *uatzin* [attributed to Webster's 1934]

huaje also: *guage* p.112

‘designating a tree indigenous to and very common in Mexico and certain parts of the south’

< Nah. *huaxin* ‘a tree indigenous to and very common in Mexico and certain parts of the south’

huajillo also: *juajillo* p.112

cp. huaje, + *-illo* DIM (Sp.)

huajolote also: *guajolote* p.119

‘A species of wild turkey, *Meleagris gallopavo mexicana*, as called in some parts of Texas’

< Nah. *huexolotl*

huisache p.112

‘A small tree (*Acacia farnesiana*) whose fragrant yellow flowers are used in perfumery’

< Nah. *huitzachin*, *huitzli* + *achi* ‘a spiny shrub’

*istle also: *ixtle*, *istle-grass* p.114

iztli also: *iztle* p.120

‘A cutting implement made of a flake of obsidian’

< Nah. *itztli* ‘a sort of obsidian from which Indians shape arrowheads, knives and other like articles’

*jacal p.119

*jalap p.109

jalapa pp.112-113

‘*Jathropha macrorhiza*, commonly found along the course of the lower Rio Grande.’ “Since the rhizome is purgative as well as emetic, the origin of this name may be referred to jalap”

< Nah. *xalapa* ‘the name of several trees whose roots yield a purgative medicine’

cp. jalap

*jicara p.120

jicote p.118

‘A species of bee (Tallichet says ‘a ground bee’), which gives a very painful sting’, as known in Texas. “In Mexico *jicote* is used more generally, being applied not only to various species of bees, but also to hornets or wasps”.

< Nah. *xicotli* ‘a species of large honeybee’

jilote p.117

‘An ear of green corn, or “roasting ear”

< Nah. *xilotl* ‘an ear of green corn, a roasting ear’

jocqui p.118

‘A Texas designation for buttermilk’

< Sp. *jocoqui* < Nah. *xococ* ‘bitter foodstuff made with milk’

*mecate p.120

*mescal also: *mezcal* p.118

*mesquite also: *mesquitap* p.113

*metate p.121

*Mexico p.109

*milpa p.121

nixtamal p.117

‘In Texas, a dish made of whole corn softened in a lime or lye solution’

< Nah. *nextamalli*, cp. tamal

*nopal also: *nopalera*, *nopalry* p.113

*ocelot p.109

ocotillo p.113

‘Jacob’s wand, *Fouquieria splendens*, a spiny tree or shrub which loves to gladden the deserts after the annual rains by putting forth its bright scarlet flowers and its foliage’. ‘Also applied to a species of candlewood related to it.’

< ocote + *-illo* DIM, cp. ocote

*peyote p.113

*pinole p.117

quiote p.116

‘Applied to the fruit of certain agaves which after baking are used as foodstuffs in Texas’

< Nah. *quiotl* or *quiotl* ‘a shoot or sprout, especially of the maguey’

*sacate also: *zacate* p.114

sapodilla cp. sapote + Sp. *-illa* DIM p.108

#sapote also: *zapote* p.113

‘The Mexican or black persimmon, *Diospyros texana*, a small tree which yields a black stain or dye’

< Nah. *tzapotl* ‘applied to various trees of diverse genera and the fruits they bear’

sinsontle p.119

‘A Texan designation – “especially current among Mexican natives” – of the mocking bird’

< Nah. *centzontlatolli* ‘four hundred (or a myriad of) voices’

*sotol also: *sotole* p.118

*tacamahaca also: *tacamahac* p.108

tamal also: *tamale* p.117

< Nah. *tamalli*

tecolote p.119

‘The great horned owl, *Bubo virginianus subarcticus*, as known in Texas (from Spanish *tecolote*)’

< Nah. *tencolotl* ‘a name said to have reference to the curvature of [an owl’s] beak’

*teocalli p.109

tepocatep p.119

‘A Texan name for the tadpole’

< Nah. *atepocatl* 'a spawn of frogs'

tepopote p.114

'An additional name for the *cañatilla*, the evergreen shrub *Ephedra antisyphilitica*; "This small shrub, says Havard, affords a popular remedy among Mexicans and frontiersmen in cases of gonorrhoea and syphilis"

< Nah. *tetl* 'stone' + *popotl* 'broom'

tequesquite p.117

'Texan, "signifying according to Tallichet 'a kind of pop-corn', is identical in meaning with esquite... and in form with another Mexican term known to our travelers and others from 1844 as denoting a native carbonate of soda mixed with sulphate and common salt, which effervesces after wet weather and later forms a crust".

< Nah. *tequixquitl* 'salt-peter', cp. esquite, tesquite

#tequila < Nah. *Tequilan* 'the place of the divide' p.118

tesquite < Nah. *tequixquitl* 'salt-peter', cp. esquite, tequesquite p.121

*tilma p.121

*toloache p.114

*tomato p.109

*tule p.115

*zopilote p.119